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The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*



"The School for
Mothers-in-Law"

BY

Brieux

Author of

"DAMAGED GOODS"

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SEPTEMBER, 1913

No. 1

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

WILLARD HUNTINGTON WRIGHT, Editor

CONTENTS

THE SCHOOL FOR MOTHERS-IN-LAW	Brieux	1
POEMS	Ezra Pound	17
JUDGMENT. Novelette	Reginald Wright Kauffman	19
HEART OF THE WORLD	Maxwell Struthers Burt	63
THE THREE HERMITS	William Butler Yeats	64
THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE	Susan Glaspell	65
PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT	Owen Hatteras	69
THE PICTURES	May Sinclair	71
A WOMAN OF THE STREETS	Charles Hanson Towne	77
A BALLAD TO A FRIEND	Richard Le Gallienne	78
IN THE PUBLIC EYE	W. Pett Ridge	79
CHALLENGE	Louis Untermeyer	83
A MOUNTAIN GATEWAY	Bliss Carman	84
CHANCE	Christabel Lowndes Yates	85
FELLOW TRAVELERS	Achmed Abdullah	90
THE AMERICAN: HIS IDEAS OF BEAUTY	H. L. Mencken	91
THE END OF A DREAM	Gabriele D'Annunzio	99
THE SEAL OF CONFESSION	Arthur Scott Craven and J. D. Beresford	105
THE CLOSE	C. Hilton-Turvey	114
"WHAT DO YOU THINK?"	Barry Benefield	115
THE STAGE ENTRANCE	Frederick Lovelace Macon	122
THE SHADOW OF ASPIRATION	Robert Haven Schauffer	122
THE PATH OF VIRTUE	Robert Garland	123
A DAY	Arthur Wallace Peach	129
VIOLETS	D. H. Lawrence	130
THE PALACE OF WISDOM	George Bronson-Howard	131
AN OLD HOUSE	Samuel McCoy	140
TABLIER BLANC. In the Original French	H. A. Dourliac	141
NAPLES	Charmy	143
RAIN IN THE NIGHT	John Vance Cheney	144
LEST I LEARN	Witter Bynner	144
THE DRAMA IN THE CAPITALS OF EUROPE	George Jean Nathan	145
GETTING RID OF THE ACTOR	H. L. Mencken	153

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THE SMART SET

The Magazine For Minds That Are Not Primitive

THE SCHOOL FOR MOTHERS-IN-LAW*

By Brieux

CHARACTERS

FIFINE
ANDRÉ
MADAME GRAINDOR (FIFINE's mother)
M. GRAINDOR (FIFINE's father)
MADAME MEILLET (ANDRÉ's mother)
A MAID

PLACE: *A small city.*

TIME: *The present.*

SCENE—*A drawing room. ANDRÉ enters in his shirt sleeves, carrying his coat in his hand. He does not see FIFINE, who is putting her hat on.*

ANDRÉ

This is too much! (*He presses hard several times on an electric button; then goes to the door at the rear and opens it, calling.*) Léontine! Léontine!

(*FIFINE comes in on tiptoe quite near to her husband, who has not yet seen her, and calls also.*)

FIFINE

Léontine! Léontine! (*She bursts out laughing and comes forward.*)

ANDRÉ

Ah! There you are! Where's the maid? My coat isn't brushed.

FIFINE

Are you going to receive some patients this morning, Doctor?

ANDRÉ

You know very well I haven't any. Ever since I passed my last examination a month ago— But I've been ringing for an hour.

FIFINE

And nobody has answered?

ANDRÉ

No.

FIFINE

That's not astonishing!

* Authorized translation by Willard Huntington Wright.

THE SMART SET

Why? ANDRÉ

 FIFINE
Because there's no one here to answer.
(*She laughs.*)

 ANDRÉ
Won't you ever be serious?

 FIFINE
Yes, when I'm twenty.

 ANDRÉ
But I'm twenty-five, and I—

 FIFINE
My poor André! You'll have to
brush yourself this morning as you did
on our honeymoon.

 ANDRÉ
I don't know where the brush is.

 FIFINE
Wait! (*She takes his coat out of his
hand and shakes it a little.*) There!

 ANDRÉ (*putting on his coat*)
Where's Léontine?

 FIFINE
Gone to find another place.

 ANDRÉ
Another place? Then she's been dis-
charged?

 FIFINE
Yes.

 ANDRÉ
Who did it?

 FIFINE
Why, mother.

 ANDRÉ
And what for?

 FIFINE
I don't know. What difference does
it make to *you*?

 ANDRÉ
And the other maid?

 FIFINE
She's gone on an errand.

Where to? ANDRÉ

 FIFINE (*laughing*)
What questions! How should I
know? It was mother who sent her.
You aren't angry, are you?

 ANDRÉ
No.

 FIFINE
Then smile a little.

 ANDRÉ (*laughing*)
All right. Kiss me.

 FIFINE
Well, only one—and don't spoil my
hat. (*He embraces her.*) There! That's
enough! By the way, do you like my
hat?

 ANDRÉ
Very nice.

 FIFINE
You haven't even looked at it.

 ANDRÉ
Certainly I have. Are you going out?

 FIFINE
It looks that way, doesn't it?

 ANDRÉ
Don't forget to go to the uphol-
sterer's.

 FIFINE
Mamma has been there.

 ANDRÉ
And what did he say?

 FIFINE
Mamma will tell you.

 ANDRÉ
Where are you going now?

 FIFINE
I'm going out with mamma.

 ANDRÉ
What are you going to do?

 FIFINE
That would be telling! . . . I'm go-
ing to buy a dog.

A dog!

ANDRÉ

FIFINE

Yes. Oh, it's so little that you wouldn't mind him at all. It's a dear—just this size! (*Demonstrating*) With tiny ears, and black eyes. Just wait and see. You can teach him all sorts of tricks. (*She jumps with joy.*) It'll be lots of fun.

ANDRÉ (*laughing*)

And how much is he, this little dear?

FIFINE

He *is* dear. But it's always that way when you want the best: you have to pay for it.

ANDRÉ

Tell me how much.

FIFINE

One hundred and fifty francs.

ANDRÉ

Are you crazy, Fifine? Why, you won't have him a week before you'll get tired of him. . . . And then again—I don't know how to say this to you—but we'll have to be a little careful what we spend.

FIFINE (*pouting*)

All right, I won't buy him. Now are you satisfied?

ANDRÉ

Yes.

FIFINE

Good-bye, good-bye!
(*She runs out.*)

ANDRÉ

Perhaps I was wrong not to let her buy a dog. But I won't stand for her mother running the house.

LÉONTINE (*entering*)

Did you ring, sir?

ANDRÉ

No. It was for—never mind.

LÉONTINE

Do you know that I'm discharged?

ANDRÉ

Yes, but what for?

LÉONTINE

Because I asked madame—that is, madame's mother—to let me go home Sunday to see my grandfather who's sick.

ANDRÉ

Well, you can go to your grandfather's and still remain in my service.

LÉONTINE

Thank you, sir. (*A bell rings.*)

ANDRÉ

Someone's ringing. Go and see who it is. (*She goes out.*) I'm going to be the master in my own home, by George! (*The maid ushers in MADAME MEILLET.*)

MADAME MEILLET

My dear child! (*They embrace.*) I just dropped in on my way to the notary's. I didn't want to pass your street without coming in to see you. How's Fifine?

ANDRÉ

Quite well. She's gone out.

MADAME MEILLET

So early? Well, I can't stay. Any patients yet?

ANDRÉ

Not a one. But we're counting a lot on influenza this winter—

MADAME MEILLET

How are things getting along between you and your mother-in-law? What on earth made you come to live here? How is everything? All right?

ANDRÉ

Yes, oh, yes, only—

MADAME MEILLET

Only what?

ANDRÉ

There are little disagreements. Fifine is not always very affectionate. She doesn't like to stay home much—

MADAME MEILLET

Oh, I understand. You need your own mother to settle things for you.

ANDRÉ

Perhaps I shouldn't have told you.

MADAME MEILLET

Not at all, not at all—I'm going to my notary now because he won't wait if I'm late, but I'm coming back; and—listen to me—I am not going to leave until everything's straightened out.

ANDRÉ

You're awfully good, mother. I didn't like to ask you—but that's just what I'd like.

MADAME MEILLET

Now don't worry, I'll arrange everything, and it won't take me long, either. Good-bye.

ANDRÉ

This afternoon, then.
(LÉONTINE enters.)

ANDRÉ

Lay three places for dinner this evening.

LÉONTINE (*surprised*)

Three?

ANDRÉ

Yes; my mother is going to dine here. . . . Well, what's the matter?

LÉONTINE

But, sir, that's impossible.

ANDRÉ

Why?

LÉONTINE

You and madame have always taken your meals with madame's parents downstairs, and the kitchen here isn't in order.

ANDRÉ

All right, then, all right.

(Enter FIFINE with a little dog under her arm.)

FIFINE

I haven't been long—

ANDRÉ

What the devil is that?

FIFINE

Cunning, isn't it? (*To the dog*) Smile at your father. (*To her husband*) Kiss him. Come close. He wants to kiss you. Come on. (ANDRÉ, after some resistance, lets himself be kissed by the dog. He carefully wipes his face afterward.) You needn't wipe your face like that. There's nothing cleaner in the world than a dog's tongue. (*To the dog*) Is oo papa naughty? Oo 'ittle dear, he was do p'etty. Mamma's 'ittle doggie! (*She embraces it.*)

ANDRÉ

I thought you weren't going to buy it.

FIFINE

I didn't. I told mother that I wanted him, and she bought him for me. Look, Léontine, isn't he pretty? And his little nose, and his little ears! Go and make a fire in the little room and put him in the little box we bought for him. (*She gives the dog to her.* To her husband) Look, André, look. He wants you to say good night. You'd almost think he knew you didn't like him. Poor 'ittle sing! Good night, p'ecious. (*She throws a kiss to the dog.* LÉONTINE goes out.)

ANDRÉ (*with a smile*)

Lucky dog!

FIFINE (*laughing and shaking her finger at him*)

I know why you say "lucky dog." Sit down—there! It was sweet of you not to scold me. I was afraid you were going to. But mother made me take him. You're a dear, sweet husband. There, take that. (*She kisses him.* ANDRÉ wishes to hold her.) No, that's enough. Be good now.

ANDRÉ

Stingy!

FIFINE

Are you going out this afternoon?

ANDRÉ

I was going to a rehearsal at the opera house, but maybe I won't go.

FIFINE
Please go.

ANDRÉ
You want me to?

FIFINE
Yes, and take me with you.

ANDRÉ
My dear girl, that's impossible.

FIFINE
Why?

ANDRÉ
No women ever go. One has to go behind the scenes. It's no place for you.

FIFINE
That's what you always say.

ANDRÉ
Come now, you'll stay here, won't you? You'll find something to do.

FIFINE
Stay here? I should say not. I'll be downstairs with mamma.

ANDRÉ
You ought to stay here—not downstairs.

FIFINE
But it bores me to death to stay here. I don't know where to find anything. With mother all of my little things are in their place. And I like it better there. . . . But you've got to take me with you. If you only knew how I'd like to go!

ANDRÉ
But that's impossible. And you ought to get used to staying home more, to take more seriously the role of wife.

FIFINE
Why should I do that as long as mother is here?

ANDRÉ
But we're not always going to stay with your people.

FIFINE
Why not?

ANDRÉ
Before long I'll have patients, and then—

FIFINE (*running away*)
Ah, here's mother now.
(*She runs to meet MADAME GRAINDOR, who enters.*)

MADAME GRAINDOR
Good morning, André.

ANDRÉ
Good morning, mother.

FIFINE
Listen, mother, André doesn't want me to go to the rehearsal with him.

MADAME GRAINDOR
André is perfectly right.

FIFINE
But *he* goes—why shouldn't *I*?

MADAME GRAINDOR
He has to go. You come with me.

FIFINE
But I wanted to—

MADAME GRAINDOR
But the rehearsal is no place for you.

ANDRÉ
That's what I told her.

MADAME GRAINDOR
I just saw Léontine when I was coming in. Has she found another place?

ANDRÉ
She's not looking for one.

MADAME GRAINDOR
Ah!

ANDRÉ
I'm going to keep her.

MADAME GRAINDOR
Ah!

ANDRÉ
I just told her she could go to her grandfather's.

MADAME GRAINDOR
I wouldn't have refused to let her go there, but I thought that under the pretext—

THE SMART SET

ANDRÉ

Oh, I'm sure she intended to go there.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Well, then, that's settled. Look, here's a package that I just brought you. (*To FIFINE*) I wager he'll like what's in it. First, I want to know if he scolded you about the dog.

FIFINE

He didn't say a word. He's a perfect dear.

MADAME GRAINDOR

All right, if you're not angry, open the package.

ANDRÉ (*obeying*)

Cigars. And my favorite brand!

MADAME GRAINDOR

Now will you talk about mothers-in-law?

ANDRÉ

Only those who don't know you speak hardly of you.

MADAME GRAINDOR

There, that's sweet of you. I came up to see you, and I said to myself: "They're all alone up there; perhaps they're getting bored," so I brought my work up. (*While talking she makes herself comfortable.*) Tell me now why everyone says that grandmothers are good and that mothers-in-law are bad, when a grandmother is really a mother-in-law?

ANDRÉ

I don't know. But I'm sure you'd make an adorable grandmother.

MADAME GRAINDOR

I hope I sha'n't be one right away.

ANDRÉ

I hope you will.

MADAME GRAINDOR

It's only of you that I am thinking. Enjoy your youth; children come soon enough.

ANDRÉ

I don't agree with you there.

MADAME GRAINDOR

You're lucky that you haven't any.

ANDRÉ

I hope that next year you will be a grandmother.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Really!

ANDRÉ

Children are the joy of the home.

MADAME GRAINDOR

You mustn't hurry up old age; it'll come soon enough. If you knew the cares and worries of children you'd change your mind. Have one—two at the most, but that's enough.

ANDRÉ

I have theories on that point. I want a lot of children, and I want them soon. France needs them.

FIFINE

Already I picture myself as the old lady who lived in the shoe.

MADAME GRAINDOR (*trying to be calm*)

You speak without knowing, my dear André. First of all, the health of Ffine will not allow the realization of these dreams.

ANDRÉ

Tut, tut!

FIFINE

I agree with mother.

MADAME GRAINDOR

You'll bankrupt yourself with nurses' bills.

ANDRÉ

On that point I also have theories. My children's mother will be their nurse.

MADAME GRAINDOR (*sourly*)

I wish I'd known that before you'd married Ffine. I don't think your ideas are decent—yes, "decent" is the word. Families which—

ANDRÉ (*drily*)

You're wrong—you're wrong there. After all, it's for us to decide.

MADAME GRAINDOR (*sweetly*)

But how you talk, my dear André! If I give you advice, it is only in your and Fifine's interest. I've lived longer than you, my dear boy, and I know life better. Later on you'll see that I'm right. But, alas, children never believe that their parents know anything.

ANDRÉ

And the children are right! I'm going to leave my children to do what they wish. If they want to they can be bankers, notaries, sculptors, painters or dramatic authors.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Why not tightrope walkers?

ANDRÉ

Yes, and tightrope walkers!

MADAME GRAINDOR (*forcing herself to laugh—to FIFINE*)

And to think I really believed that he was serious!

ANDRÉ

But I am!

MADAME GRAINDOR

You certainly like to joke. (*A pause*) I went to the upholsterer's this morning, and he's coming to put the canopies on the bed.

ANDRÉ

You mean he is going to take them away.

MADAME GRAINDOR

No, put them up.

ANDRÉ

I asked Fifine to have them taken back.

FIFINE

That's right; I remember now. (*To ANDRÉ*) And I only told mother that you'd asked me to go to the upholsterer's, I forgot why. Yes, of course, it was to have him take the bed curtains back.

MADAME GRAINDOR

And curtains that I gave you! If you don't like them we can exchange them.

ANDRÉ

I don't want any kind of curtains on our bed. It isn't hygienic. The air doesn't circulate easily enough. The dust gathers in the folds, and dust is a world that microbes live in.

MADAME GRAINDOR

My husband and I have always had curtains on our bed, and they didn't kill us. Put them on the windows then.

ANDRÉ

Not there, either. Besides, we sleep with our windows open.

MADAME GRAINDOR (*to FIFINE*)

Is that true?

FIFINE (*shaking her head*)

Yes.

ANDRÉ

When you were young, mother, no one knew anything about hygiene. No doubt all this surprises you, but I'm going to surprise you even more. I'm going to ask you to do two things for me.

MADAME GRAINDOR

You frighten me.

ANDRÉ

The first is to let Fifine and me dine and lunch home.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Don't you get enough to eat downstairs? I am poorly repaid for all the trouble I have taken to be agreeable to you. I spend my whole life trying to please you. I'm very unfortunate. If my cooking doesn't please you, say so. Tell me what you like. (*She is ready to weep.*) I noticed that you liked roast veal, and I've had it for you three times a week. Each time I have it I have a scene with my husband, who can't stand roast veal—but I have it just the same.

ANDRÉ

You are very good—I never denied that.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Well, then, come to dinner when you like. And don't come any oftener than you like.

ANDRÉ

My second request is this: I want you to help me keep Fifine here—at home. She goes out too much.

MADAME GRAINDOR

But you don't want to make a prisoner of her.

ANDRÉ

No, but I want her to learn how to be mistress of her own house. I want her to learn how to treat the servants.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Don't I do it well enough for you?

ANDRÉ

Certainly, but I want Fifine to do it.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Then you don't want her to visit me any more?

ANDRÉ

Yes—but not so often. From being with you so much and with me so little, we've come to a point where she's more your daughter than she is my wife.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Very well; he demands it. Good! He's the master.

ANDRÉ

Thank you. Try to make Fifine understand the situation, won't you?
(*ANDRÉ goes out.*)

MADAME GRAINDOR (*bursting out*)

This is too much! I didn't expect this from you! No! For half an hour you sit here and let him insult me. You say nothing. You don't try to defend me.

FIFINE

But André hasn't insulted you, mother.

MADAME GRAINDOR

That's right! I see that you approve of what he has done. Very good! That was all that was lacking. The ill-bred cad! I don't understand how I restrained myself so long. And to think that I bought him cigars! You think

I'm easy, and you just make fun of me. (*She begins to put the cigars back in the boxes.*)

FIFINE

But, mother—

MADAME GRAINDOR

That's all right—that's all right. I know what I'm doing. Cigars for him, eh? This is too much. Your father will smoke them all. And when Sir André wishes to honor us at dinner he may have one at dessert. (*She carries the package to the door in the rear and calls.*) Léontine, take this down for me.

FIFINE

But that's not fair. You shouldn't take them back.

MADAME GRAINDOR

No, I'd probably hurt his feelings.

FIFINE

My husband—

MADAME GRAINDOR

"My husband" — "my husband"! What about your husband? One would think that you were talking about a saint. I'm not afraid of him, you know — your doctor without a patient.

FIFINE

Well, it's not his fault if he has no patients. You take everything too seriously.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Now call me an imbecile! He was the one who taught you to answer me that way.

FIFINE

He's kind-hearted, and he loves you a great deal.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Is that so? Well, I hated him from the first day of your marriage. I tried to be nice to him because it was my duty, and if I spoil him at the table, and if I give him presents, it's for your sake — it's to make him like to come with us — it's to make him do what *you* want him to do.

FIFINE

What's he done to you?

MADAME GRAINDOR

What's he done to me? He's taken you from us. I'm jealous of him, if you want to know.

FIFINE

I don't understand—

MADAME GRAINDOR

You'll understand well enough when you have a daughter. And what are you going to do, now? Going to let yourself be led around by the nose? Between your mother and your husband you wouldn't hesitate! No doubt you'd choose that cad.

FIFINE

Oh!

MADAME GRAINDOR

You'll see—you'll see! You'll be a pretty sight in a few years, with your bunch of children filling the house with their noise—that'll be fine, won't it? Yes, and with your cradles scattered through all the house, and your dirty linen in all the corners—you'll be a nice sight. You'll look old at thirty. And you'll see that I am right when you compare yourself with your friends who have less patriotic husbands. And while you're here at home wiping your children's noses, he'll be out flirting with other girls. Or he'll be flitting about behind the scenes at performances that he's not able to take you to.

FIFINE

André unfaithful to me?

MADAME GRAINDOR (*ironically*)

Oh, no, he's different from the others. Are you blind? Don't you see anything? You don't understand anything at all?

FIFINE

What is it that I don't understand?

MADAME GRAINDOR

That I get on his nerves—this precious husband of yours. We get on his nerves,

your father and I. He simply wants to get rid of us.

FIFINE

How is that?

MADAME GRAINDOR

When he's forced you to eat here, he knows very well that like all women you will try to appear happy, whether you are or not, and you will tell no one of his dinners in town and of his evenings passed—God knows where. Ah, no! When that happens don't come and cry about it to us.

FIFINE

No danger.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Look around you a bit. M. Bougin has a dancer, M. Pellitier a singer, M. Prevost the cashier in the Café des Arts, M. Moutier the cashier in the Café de la Comédie; M. Dellamaire has Madame Courtin, and M. Courtin has Madame Bouquet. Oh, I know very well how it is! One always thinks she will be the only one to escape; that one's husband is an exception to the rest. One tries to fool one's self up to the last, and then regrets not having listened to one's mother.

FIFINE

I beg of you, mother!

MADAME GRAINDOR

Now, if you like what I have told you, if you wish to be a slave, that's your own business, only don't be surprised when you see people smiling when you pass. You'll be a sad case, with your innocence and credulity. Besides, they've commenced to make fun of you already.

FIFINE

Who?

MADAME GRAINDOR

Someone that I'm not at liberty to name. You probably think I'm lying to you. But I don't care. Good Lord! Children don't respect their parents any longer.

THE SMART SET

FIFINE

But I tell you I love you.

MADAME GRAINDOR

If you really loved us you wouldn't treat us as you do. You think it's for regret that I'm saying this? I'm saying it because you'd be very unhappy alone. *We don't matter—your father and I. Happily, we shall soon be dead.*

FIFINE

Mamma, I promise you to talk to André about it. I promise.

MADAME GRAINDOR (*tenderly*)

All right; good-bye, my dear. I'm not angry with you. Come and see us when he'll let you. Only, if you don't want us to be too unhappy, try to come often.

(MADAME GRAINDOR *goes out*. ANDRÉ *enters*.)

ANDRÉ

Well? Did your mother make you listen to reason?

FIFINE

I'm old enough to take care of myself, thank you.

ANDRÉ

What have you decided to do?

FIFINE

I've decided that you're not going to that rehearsal. . . . If you go, I'm going, too.

ANDRÉ

I'm going, and I'm going alone. I don't take my orders from either you or your mother.

FIFINE

No one said anything about mother.

ANDRÉ

It's she who's put these notions into your head.

FIFINE

I don't need anybody's help. If you're so anxious to go to this performance without me, then it's to meet people you're ashamed of. I know what's up.

ANDRÉ

What people are you talking about?

FIFINE

How should I know the women's names?

ANDRÉ

That doesn't sound a bit like you. Come now, own up. Your mother has been telling you things to make you jealous.

FIFINE

That's where you're wrong. Mamma has said absolutely nothing to me. Understand—nothing!

ANDRÉ

But these suspicions are unworthy of you.

FIFINE

I repeat that no one has said a word to me. I'm capable of having an idea of my own. You are untrue to me, or you're going to be untrue to me. I know it. You're all the same, you men. I'm not simple-minded enough to think that you're an exception. I don't care to have people laughing at me.

ANDRÉ

If your mother has said nothing to you on this subject, what *has* she said to you? Did she advise you to stay at home more?

FIFINE

Ah, there it is! Stay home, while you're out flirting!

ANDRÉ

I know perfectly well that this doesn't come from you.

FIFINE

Yes, it does. It comes from me. You men are either tyrants or hypocrites, and if I am your wife I'm not your slave, and I'll go out when I please. I'll go out every day, and I'll stay out as long as I like. I'll never be here—never, never!

ANDRÉ

Fifine, listen to me! Don't be silly. You're all excited; you don't mean what you say.

FIFINE

Yes I do. (*A silence*) Mamma took your cigars back. I told her to.

ANDRÉ

I'm glad of it.

FIFINE

Now you needn't say anything against mother.

ANDRÉ (*after a silence*)

Fifine, I hate to say it, but your mother is trying to make us both unhappy.

FIFINE

Say nothing more about mother; it'll do no good. You'll never succeed in turning me from her. I'm going to dine with her every day, and I'm going to lunch with her every day; and if you don't like it you can eat at restaurants.

ANDRÉ (*tenderly*)

Your mother has set you against me. She'll never forgive me for being your husband. I'm not angry with her because I can guess what her maternal egoism suffers. She wanted to keep you near to her all her life, and she hates me for having taken you away. She doesn't know how much harm she can do if we don't love each other. Try to love me a little, Fifine, for our love will tide us over all these differences without robbing us of our happiness.

FIFINE (*on the point of crying*)

But why do you want to go to this rehearsal?

ANDRÉ

I'm really not anxious to go.

FIFINE (*tenderly*)

You're not anxious to go? You're not anxious to go? How is that? A minute ago—

MADAME MEILLET (*entering*)

What's this I hear? Are you quarreling?

ANDRÉ

Fifine's a little nervous, that's all.

FIFINE

That's all.

MADAME MEILLET (*going up to FIFINE*)

What's the matter— isn't everything going smoothly? (*To ANDRÉ*) You,

André, go away. Go over there and read your paper. Fifine and I are going to have a friendly talk together. Go on away, you bad boy, go on. (*To FIFINE*) Let's sit down here now. Has he been a naughty husband?

FIFINE

There's no use talking to me as if I were a child. I am no longer a little girl.

MADAME MEILLET

Then let's talk like two old women. You'll certainly acknowledge that I have a right, when I see my son so unhappy, to ask you what the trouble is.

FIFINE

It's I who am unhappy, not he.

MADAME MEILLET

But, my child, I know my son—he is goodness and uprightness itself; and if one of you is in the wrong, it's not he.

FIFINE

Oh, of course, it's I who am in the wrong!

MADAME MEILLET

You'll agree, won't you, that I've known André longer than you? And having known him longer, I know better how to appreciate his rare qualities.

FIFINE (*getting angry*)

Very well, madame, it's understood that your son is an angel and that I am a monster. He's an angel, an angel, an angel! I say it, and I repeat it, and I proclaim it. He has all the virtues and I all the faults. I will even add that he has clients. In fact, he has anything you wish.

MADAME MEILLET

What a snappy little temper you have, madame! I can see very well that life with you would be no bed of roses. The poor boy deserves better than that.

FIFINE

Well, you should have found him a better wife—

ANDRÉ

Fifine, I forbid you to speak to my mother in that tone of voice!

THE SMART SET

FIFINE

Then tell your mother to let me alone.

ANDRÉ

And I order you to be quiet. I have always treated my mother with respect and I won't let a little spitfire of your age—

FIFINE

Spitfire!

ANDRÉ

Yes, spitfire! If I'd known of your heartlessness and impertinence—

FIFINE

What would you have done?

ANDRÉ

Keep still. You're a little blockhead.

MADAME MEILLET (*weeping*)

Don't quarrel over me. I'm going away. My poor boy!

ANDRÉ

Stay, mother. Fifine owes you an apology, and she's going to give it to you.

FIFINE

Indeed!

(*Enter M. and Mme. GRAINDOR.*)

M. GRAINDOR

What on earth's the matter? Everyone in the house is listening to you!

MADAME GRAINDOR

I thought you were actually fighting up here. What have they done to you, my poor Fifine?

ANDRÉ

She's been insolent to my mother, and I want her to apologize.

FIFINE

I have not been insolent.

ANDRÉ

You certainly have.

MADAME MEILLET (*weeping*)

I wish I were dead.

MADAME GRAINDOR

My child insolent, never!

ANDRÉ

Mother, mother!

MADAME MEILLET (*still weeping*)

She will make you unhappy yet.

M. GRAINDOR

Now see here, my children, kiss each other.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Don't do anything of the kind, Fifine!

FIFINE

Of course I won't.

MADAME MEILLET (*still weeping*)

Oh, my God!

GRAINDOR

Fifine, go and make it up with your husband.

FIFINE

He called me a little blockhead, a little blockhead, a little blockhead!

ANDRÉ

You deserved it.

MADAME MEILLET (*continuing to weep*)

Oh, oh, my God!

GRAINDOR

Look here, André! Listen, Marie!

MADAME GRAINDOR

If you apologized, Fifine, you *would* be a blockhead.

ANDRÉ (*to FIFINE*)

Your mother is the cause of all this . . .

MADAME MEILLET

My God, my God!

GRAINDOR

Go on, Fifine, go and make it up with your husband.

MADAME GRAINDOR

I forbid it!

MADAME MEILLET

Your daughter is a hussy. All we want is—

FIFINE

He wants to keep me shut up here.

ANDRÉ

It's not true!

GRAINDOR

Madame Meillet! Listen to me, Marie—

MADAME GRAINDOR

And you, Madame Meillet, what are you, after all?

MADAME MEILLET

All we want is that your daughter do her duty, which is to stay home sometimes and not be always out—

MADAME GRAINDOR

You're not making the law here, you—

FIFINE

This is too much! This is too much!

ANDRÉ

That's what I say.

MADAME MEILLET

I have just as much right to lay down the law here as you. I'm in my son's house.

MADAME GRAINDOR

We'll see about that. I'm in my daughter's house.

GRAINDOR

Are you never going to finish? For heaven's sake, keep still.

MADAME GRAINDOR

No, I'll say what I have to say.

FIFINE (*pointing to MADAME MEILLET*)
Make her shut up first. She came here to bother me. I'll never apologize to her.

ANDRÉ

I won't allow you to be impertinent to my mother!

MADAME MEILLET (*to MADAME GRAINDOR*)

You never did know how to bring up your children. You've absolutely spoiled your girl . . .

GRAINDOR

You're all going to keep still and not talk like that. I want everybody to shut up.

MADAME GRAINDOR

My daughter didn't get married to be a slave. My duty is to protect her, and protect her I will.

GRAINDOR (*to his wife*)

Marie, listen to me a moment. André is right: Fifine's duty is to be home to take care of her household.

FIFINE

Is that so?

MADAME GRAINDOR

Yes, but—

GRAINDOR

If you'd only listened to me when I told you that the children should live alone this would never have happened.

FIFINE (*looking at her father*)

So, that's it, is it? (*She takes off her earrings, her rings and her brooches, and feverishly throws them on the table. She pulls the lace from her waist and rushes from the room.*) So, that's it! All right, then!

MADAME MEILLET

With the dowry that you gave her, she can't keep ten servants.

MADAME GRAINDOR

What's that about the dowry? And you who—

GRAINDOR

Go out and see what your daughter is doing.

MADAME GRAINDOR (*who had not seen her go out*)

Fifine, where are you, Fifine?
(*She goes out, and comes back holding FIFINE by the hand.*)

FIFINE

Let me alone—let me alone! As long as you want me to be the servant, let

THE SMART SET

me alone; I'm going back to the kitchen to wash the dishes. *(Then she has a spell of crying and sobs like a child; she wipes her eyes with the back of her hand and appears most unhappy.)*

MADAME GRAINDOR

Fifine, my little girl, I told you he'd make us all unhappy.

ANDRÉ

Let her alone.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Sir, she's my daughter!

ANDRÉ

She's my wife.

MADAME GRAINDOR

But you're in my house here.

ANDRÉ

If that's the case, I'll get out of it.

MADAME GRAINDOR

I'm not keeping you back.

GRAINDOR

Now look here, now look here—

MADAME GRAINDOR

Let him alone; let him return to his dear mother.

ANDRÉ

Exactly. *(To his mother)* Come, let us go. *(To MADAME GRAINDOR)* If Fifine wishes to come she knows where to find me.

(Exit ANDRÉ and MADAME MEILLET.)

MADAME GRAINDOR

Good! That's done!

GRAINDOR

Good, did you say?

MADAME GRAINDOR *(taking him to the right)*

You look as if you're going to a funeral. Why, Fifine is going to stay with us. She won't be unhappy here. *(To FIFINE)* There, that's done with.

FIFINE

Yes, it's done with, and I'm glad of it.

MADAME GRAINDOR

Then everybody's happy. We're going to have a good time together, we three. *(To her husband)* Cheer up, you! Tonight we're going to have some eggs à la neige.

FIFINE *(absent-mindedly)*

That's good.

MADAME GRAINDOR

You don't seem to be very much pleased.

FIFINE

But I am.

MADAME GRAINDOR

And we'll go to the theater.

FIFINE

I don't want you to be amused. What are you doing all this for? I have absolutely no reason to be unhappy. I am not unhappy. Not at all. *(She wipes away a tear when no one is looking.)*

MADAME GRAINDOR

Of course you're not unhappy.

GRAINDOR *(thinking very deeply, then making a move like a person who has come to a decision. To his wife)*

I want to talk to Fifine. Leave us alone a minute.

MADAME GRAINDOR

But—

GRAINDOR

I told you that I wanted to speak with her; now go away. I'll call you. *(MADAME GRAINDOR goes out.)* Come here, Fifine, sit down and let's talk together. Now tell me what you intend to do.

FIFINE

Nothing, father.

GRAINDOR

Nothing, "father"! Say "papa" as you did two hours ago. I've done nothing to you. Your mother—I don't know—she likes to interfere in your household, but I—

FIFINE

I accuse no one.

GRAINDOR

That isn't the question. What do you intend to do? For example, tomorrow?

FIFINE

Nothing. No more than I have done today.

GRAINDOR

Going to stay here? And live with us?

FIFINE

Yes.

GRAINDOR

All the time?

FIFINE

All the time.

GRAINDOR

You want to do that?

FIFINE

Yes.

GRAINDOR

But what of me? You haven't asked me if I would like to have you here. In fact, when we married you off we thought you were fixed, and here you are falling back on us again. Well, I hadn't counted on that. I wanted to rent this apartment.

FIFINE

What! You can't mean—

GRAINDOR (*trying to lie*)

Your mother and I like to be alone at lunch. The fact is we don't want you.

FIFINE (*very calm*)

Don't say that. You are tickled to death. You want me to believe that you're not sorry in order to have me go. However, I'm going to stay here until you put me out.

GRAINDOR

Then you really don't love your husband?

FIFINE (*weakly*)

No.

GRAINDOR

Then you'll have to get a divorce.

FIFINE

A divorce!

GRAINDOR

Why, certainly! The fact is, I believe André intends to get one.

FIFINE (*smiling a little*)

He! You can't make me believe that, papa.

GRAINDOR

Well, if I can't make you believe it I'm not going to try. Let's talk seriously. (*Tenderly*) FIFINE, it's only a lovers' quarrel. You mustn't let it last. Tonight you mustn't dine here; you must go and find your husband.

FIFINE

Not I. André has commanded me to do something, and I refuse to be ordered about.

GRAINDOR

Then we'll have to resort to heroic methods. You told me a minute ago that you'd stay here till I put you out: well, I'm going to put you out.

FIFINE

I'd like to see you!

GRAINDOR

Well, you're going to see it. I'm not angry with you, you know; I still love you—I'm not going to try to fool you on that point—only, I'm going to put you out.

FIFINE

You're joking.

GRAINDOR

Not in the least. Get up and get out.

FIFINE (*rather bothered, but still trying to smile*)

You'll have to do it by force.

GRAINDOR (*very tenderly*)

Don't make me do that, FIFINE. . . . I want to tell you something frankly. If I listened only to my own heart and

THE SMART SET

my own happiness I would beg you to stay here all the time, because I love to have you about, to hear and to see you, to know that you're near me. It's very nice at my age to be fondled and cajoled by these little hands—but old people ought to be alone. It's hard to say this to you; it's hard to decide to say this to you—the greatest proof of love that old people can give to their children is this one—because it's the greatest sadness that comes into their lives. (*Very tenderly*) Now, Fifine, leave us.

FIFINE

You're awfully good.

GRAINDOR

It's not so easy to be good as I believed.

FIFINE

Have I made you sad?

GRAINDOR

Yes, that's all children ever do. But if you wish to console me, all you have to do is to be happy.—Not a word now, come. . . . (*He takes her by the hand and leads her tenderly to the door.*) I am going to put you out; go and get your hat and coat.

FIFINE

Let me kiss you.

GRAINDOR (*with difficulty holding back his tears*)

No, it is no use; we're going to see each other, we're going to see each other very soon. (*He comes forward mopping his eyes. FIFINE stays a moment at the door at the back.*)

(*Enter ANDRÉ and his mother.*)

MADAME MEILLET

We've come to make a last effort at reconciliation. My son demands it.

GRAINDOR

Wait. (*He calls his wife.*) Marie! Marie! (*Enter MADAME GRAINDOR.*)

Here's André and his mother, who have come to—

MADAME MEILLET

Make a last effort—

ANDRÉ

At reconciliation.

MADAME GRAINDOR

But—

GRAINDOR

Let me speak. This all rests with the children. They're going to make it up right here before us.

MADAME GRAINDOR

We must first—

GRAINDOR

Keep still now. They're going to make it up here before us, and we are going to say nothing, none of us. Does everybody agree?

MADAME MEILLET

For me, I agree.

MADAME GRAINDOR

I also.

GRAINDOR

Then go on, children. Make it up. (*A long silence. FIFINE and ANDRÉ go slowly toward each other, holding out their hands and saying nothing. They smile and embrace each other.*) Now, youngsters, as the house is mine, I give you notice.

ANDRÉ

Where shall we go?

MADAME MEILLET

Not to my home! I've learned my lesson.

GRAINDOR

As for me, I don't want any more little monkeys or dogs in my house.



POEMS

By Ezra Pound

N. Y.

MY City, my beloved, my white!
Ah, slender,
Listen! Listen to me, and I will breathe into thee a soul.
Delicately upon the reed, attend me!

*Now do I know that I am mad,
For here are a million people surly with traffic;
This is no maid.
Neither could I play upon any reed if I had one.*

My City, my beloved,
Thou art a maid with no breasts,
Thou art slender as a silver reed.
Listen to me, attend me!
And I will breathe into thee a soul,
And thou shalt live forever.

A GIRL

THE tree has entered my hands,
The sap has ascended my arms,
The tree has grown in my breast—
Downward,
The branches grow out of me, like arms.

Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them.
A child—so high—you are,
And all this is folly to the world.

AN IMMORALITY

SING we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

A VIRGINAL

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
 I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
 For my surrounding air has a new lightness;
 Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
 And left me cloaked as with a gauze of ether;
 As with sweet leaves; as with a subtle clearness.
 Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
 To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.

No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavor,
 Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
 Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
 As winter's wound with her slight hand she staunches,
 Hath of the tress a likeness of the savor:
 As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

SUB MARE

It is, and is not; I am sane enough,
 Since you have come this place has hovered round me,
 This fabrication built of autumn roses,
 Then there's a goldish color, different.

And one gropes in these things as delicate
 Algæ reach up and out beneath
 Pale slow green surgings of the under wave,
 'Mid these things older than the names they have,
 These things that are familiars of the god.

PAN IS DEAD

PAN is dead. Great Pan is dead.
 Ah, bow your heads, ye maidens all,
 And weave ye him his coronal.

There is no summer in the leaves,
 And withered are the sedges;
 How shall we weave a coronal,
 Or gather floral pledges?

That I may not say, ladies.
 Death was ever a churl.
 That I may not say, ladies.
 How should he show a reason,
 That he has taken our Lord away
 Upon such hollow season?

JUDGMENT*

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

THE faint breeze of an evening in late May just stirred the curtains of the darkened room. The scent of the season was in the air; it climbed from the treetops in the nearby city square and floated over the window sill. Spring, the oldest, the sweetest and the subtlest of liars, was at the ear of the world once more, and in the ear of the world was whispering:

"You are still young, and I have made you younger. You can do it all over. You can begin afresh. Do it all over, begin afresh—now!"

The woman in the twilight at the apartment house window listened to that whisper and believed it, as she had been listening and believing ever since, long weeks before, the first faint hint of approaching warmth, creeping northward from Carolinian valleys and through Pennsylvania waterways, sought a timid foothold in the New York streets. She had listened and planned and acted; and now, it seemed, the moment had arrived to call Spring to his accounting.

Leaning far out of the window, a shadow bending from the shadows of her own house toward the shadows of the street, Mrs. Trent assured herself that she was indeed still young, that she was much younger than her thirty-one years would have permitted another woman to be. And, upon this insistence, she did what few young people do, and what Edith Trent up to that time had scarcely ever done: she permitted her thoughts to desert the present and the future, with which they were habitually busied, and to run, albeit gently in regard to her own sensibilities, over the past.

She could justify that past, and she

did justify it. If, at twenty-two, she had known more of the world than the twenty-year-old lad whom she had determined to marry, the fault surely lay with Jim, who should have been more worldly wise. If she had tricked him into that marriage, he was at least willing enough to marry her. If the trick, the lie that she had told him concerning her condition, was soon discovered, so had she soon discovered that Jim's expectations of a substantial inheritance from his aunt were, however sincere, equally ill founded. Edith was sure that, in spite of her deceptions, she had loved the spirited boy; she was precisely as sure that love could not reasonably be expected to last when the spirited boy grew into a struggling painter without any apparent hope of success in the art that engaged a half of his affections and that his wife did not care to understand.

Her married life had been, she assured herself, a dull struggle, and, though the dullness was occasionally relieved by excursions beyond the sphere she had chosen, Edith felt quite satisfied that Jim, too, had sought and found variety. She could remember with perfect equanimity Harry Michaelson, Tommy Kirkpatrick and Billy Namyna. The only things that had disturbed her were a few brief letters: one incautious letter that she knew Jim somewhere preserved, and two or three other incautious letters, which she had reason to believe he had secured and somewhere still possessed.

But now—

There came at the door of her darkened room the knock that she had been waiting for. Edith turned.

"Come in," she said.

The door opened.

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"Edith?" an almost stealthy voice inquired.

"Yes. You're late, Charley." She was a little annoyed by his tardiness. "Where on earth have you been?"

A shadow entered and took her in its arms.

"My father wasn't so well. He kept me. You've got it awfully dark here, Edith."

She was as glad to rest her head on his shoulder as ever she had been to rest it on another's.

"I know. I've been thinking," she explained, "and I can't think when the light's on."

"Where's—where's Jim?"

At the mention of that name she drew away and returned to the window.

"Sit down here," she said, indicating in the twilight a chair beside her own. "He's gone out. I asked him to."

"And he went?"

"Of course. I told him I wanted a private talk with you."

She knew now that she was young, and she had always been determined. The worst was over: she had faced Jim and forced, as she had so often forced, her will on him; she had once, in a tantrum, told him that she would have respected him had he beaten her, and she now almost hated him for what she considered the mere weakness of his compliance in promising her liberty. He would not fight; he would not produce the one letter; his silence regarding the other letters indicated that he would not produce them. As always, he was to give her her way; the parts that those other men had played, the part that Jim himself had really played, need never be known to the world nor to Charley Vanaman. She could forget all these things in the great love that the gods had sent her.

Charley, revolving her last statement to him in a mind that was generally steady but seldom quick, chuckled. His chuckles were an inherent part of his conversation, and this one was compact of admiration and surprise.

"You certainly don't mind telling Jim what you want," he said.

"It's the only way to deal with him—

tell him what you want but not what you want it for. You know how easy he is." She so despised her husband that she could not speak pleasantly of him even to his successful rival. She leaned her chin on her hand, and her elbow on the sill below the open window. The faint spring breeze cooled her burning cheeks. "I've had it out with him this time," she added.

Charley took a great breath. "You don't mean—"

"Yes, I do. I told him I wanted a divorce, that I wanted him to let me get a divorce."

Vanaman half rose. "Did you tell him why?"

"Of course I did. That was one case where I had to give reasons. I said I didn't love him and wanted to marry somebody else."

"Me? Did you say it was me?"

"I didn't have to. He understood that. If he hadn't been so wrapped up in the pictures that he'll never do more than just make a living out of, he'd have guessed it long ago."

"But then—" Charley's voice broke. "Do you think I'd better stay here?"

Edith laughed. "What nonsense! Doesn't this show I can manage him? Oh, no; he thinks he's so intellectual and superior that he seems glad to be able to pose as a philosopher and take this thing in a way that nobody else would. I humored him in that, and you must." She broke off sharply. "I'm ashamed to have been married to such a man!"

Charley resumed his seat, but his posture was still uncertain.

"It seems to me he's rather decent in this."

"You don't know him. It's nothing but conceit."

"Then it's lucky for us he's conceited, Edith. How much did you tell him, anyhow?"

"All that I had to, but no more."

"Does he guess that we—that you and I've been—"

"He pretends he thinks it's all on the high spiritual plane that he puts himself on, and I dare say he half believes it is."

Charley settled more comfortably in his chair.

"He's promised not to contest?"

"Yes, he's promised."

"Does he know you'll probably bring the suit in this State?"

"I didn't say. It can't make any difference."

"But in New York there's only one ground."

"Oh, he's so much in the clouds that he'll never remember that."

"He'll be told of it as soon as he talks to his lawyer."

"He won't talk to his lawyer. He said he wouldn't; he's too proud to appear to take any interest. He said all he'd do would be to write to a lawyer to represent him formally, not interfere and not bother him again till it was over. He's going to do exactly what we want him to do: nothing."

"Do you think he'll stick to that?"

"I think I can make him stick to it."

Vanaman sighed, but whether from relief or doubt was not clear.

"Well," he said, "I guess it'll be all right then. I'll give the evidence you told me to, and I can get some cheap detective to back me up."

Her eyes were still turned upon the treetops in the square, but her hand sought his.

"I love you," she said quietly.

His hand returned her pressure. He wanted to kiss her, but, for the moment, something restrained him.

"It does seem a little like an ugly trick," he ventured.

"What does?" She had moved quickly.

"Why," he hesitated, "all this—this frame-up."

Edith rose to her feet.

"It's not anything of the kind," she said, and there was anger and honest conviction in her voice. "It's the truth—really. I'm perfectly certain he has been guilty some time or other—you said so yourself once—only we can't prove it. What's the difference whether he was guilty last year or this month? I believe you like the man!"

"I don't exactly dislike him."

"Well, he thinks you're no better than the dust under his feet. I can tell you some of the things he's said about

you, and I will when we've more time. He's always laughing at your invention. Only yesterday he said you were as stupid as you are hopeful. 'If such a miracle is possible,' is the way he said it."

Charley wriggled. His invention and his cleverness were his tender points.

"There's money in my game," he said, "and there's not any in Jim's."

"Then listen." Edith spread out her arms. "Whatever I've done or will do will be for you. It's not wrong, but if it is I'd do it for your sake. It's our only chance, Charley. So, if you don't want me, say so now, for by tomorrow it'll be too late. I'm to leave this apartment in the morning."

His answer was the answer that she had confidently expected, the answer that, loving him, she wanted. He rose and put his arms about her. He said what she had said a few minutes before. He said:

"I love you."

II

As he picked up the telephone receiver that morning, several months after Edith's final break with her husband, Vanaman noticed that his hand shook, and it occurred to him to wonder if he were afraid of the woman he was about to talk to. He could not understand how it was possible for a man to be afraid of a woman he loved.

"Hudson one-two-nine-three," he ordered.

In his ear the number was imperfectly echoed:

"One-two-nine-th-r-ree Hudson."

"That's right," said Vanaman.

He was sitting in his own room, for he had just crawled out of bed. There was a mirror on the wall opposite him, and, as he waited, he glanced at it.

"I'm fine, I am!" he murmured to his reflection. "I look almost as bad as I feel."

He was looking seedy. Ordinarily a short and stocky man with pink cheeks and an alert face, today he seemed shrunk and dull. His eyes, always a little prominent, were now red and bulging as a frog's. His hair, which he

had not yet brushed, rose dry and brittle from his round poll, and his mouth hung so heavily that it tugged at his cheeks.

"Hello!"

The word darted into his head as if it were an arrow. It was sharp and irritable.

Charley started. "I wish she wouldn't spring herself that way," he thought. But he achieved a smile; he felt that, even in a telephone conversation with her, his face must not show disloyalty. After all, he was not disloyal; he was, for the first time in his life, thoroughly in love.

"Good morning, dear," he said.

"Who's talking?"

He was annoyed. Could there, he reflected, be any mistake?

"Isn't this Mrs. Trent?" he inquired.

"If you don't tell me who's talking, I'll ring off."

There was no mistaking her voice now: it was Edith's.

"This is Charley," said Vanaman.

"Didn't you recognize me?"

"No, I didn't."

"But, dearie, I've been calling you every morning at this time for weeks, and—"

"And I've always told you to give your name first. You know we can't be too careful."

"Nonsense. It doesn't matter now. It's all over but the signing of the decree."

"Perhaps it is, but you can never tell. I'm beginning to believe this thing hasn't any end."

Vanaman chuckled. He was one of those men who like to feel that the women they love are their inferiors in common sense.

"Poof!" he said. "That's what I wanted to talk to you about. I've just been calling up Schultz's office. I slept late this morning, and I thought perhaps—"

"What did he say?"

"Just a moment, please. I slept late, and I thought perhaps—"

"Oh, do tell me what the lawyer said!"

"All right." It seemed to Vanaman that he was always being interrupted.

"He said there was no question but that the decree would be signed today."

He believed that this would be good news and be received accordingly, but the voice in his ear began its reply with a gasp of dissatisfaction.

"Today! I should think it would. Don't they know we want to have it all straightened out by this afternoon?"

"Why, Edith—"

"Didn't you tell Schultz that? I told you to tell him that."

"Yes, I told him; but Schultz isn't the judge, dear."

"Well, he can tell the judge."

"How could he, Edith? He's only one of the lawyers in the case, and the—"

"If he's much of a lawyer, I should think he could hurry things a little. Is that all he said?"

"Yes, that's all, but it's pretty good. You see—"

"Why don't you come up here?"

Vanaman's cheeks, which, even on this morning, were pink, deepened to the red of pleasure.

"I was going to ask if I might," he said. "I thought it would be so nice if we could be together when the news came. I thought—"

"All right. Come on."

There was a click in his ear. He knew that she had hung up the receiver at her end of the line.

Vanaman turned to dress. He was a man of about thirty, tending lately toward fat and laziness. He was apt to be careless in the matter of his clothes: when he wanted to appear fashionable and thought that he was going somewhere where he would not have to open his overcoat, his habit was to retain a sack suit and don a silk hat. This morning, however, he made his toilet with uncommon care.

Once in his clothes, he descended the stairs softly. He wanted to pass unobserved the door of his father's room; but the landing floor creaked under his heavy tread, and the door was opened. His sister had detected him.

"Charley," said she.

She spoke in the commanding whisper that is employed by all amateur nurses. The dim light of the stairway showed

her to be a dumpy woman with an empty face and too many years for marriage.

"Charley," she repeated. She put out a plump hand.

Vanaman brushed her hand away.

"Let me go, Mame," he said. "I'm in a hurry."

"But, Charley," pleaded his sister, "you're never going out without saying good morning to papa? He had a very bad night."

Charley gave a short laugh.

"So did I," said he.

"Oh, Charley!"

In the grip of that argument, Vanaman twisted his body as a wayward lad twists himself when the schoolmistress substitutes gentle persuasion for the righteous rod.

"Oh, well," he said, "I'm sorry. I don't want him to be sick, but I *am* in a hurry, and—"

"He wants to see you," said Mame Vanaman. "He's been asking for you these two hours, but I didn't want to wake you up."

"All right," said Vanaman resignedly. He really was sorry for his father, but he really was in a hurry, too. "I'll come in; but, mind you, it's just for a moment."

He brushed by her and entered the second floor front bedroom, which his father, a widower when the family moved to New York at its younger members' proposal, had furnished as much as possible after the manner of the corresponding room in the house in Carmel where the elder Vanaman had made his little fortune and which he had never ceased to regret leaving. Charley saw the room and hated it. He saw the walnut washstand with a marble top, the walnut bureau with a marble top, the marble mantelpiece and the high walnut bed in which his father lay.

The old man was covered to the chin, his long gray beard resting outside the sheet that Mame had tucked about him with almost mathematical precision. His large head was quite bald, and the skin drawn tight over his high cheek bones and beak nose was yellow. He seemed very still, but the eyes that, under bushy brows of iron gray, sought Charley's were black and keen.

"Good morning," said Charley with a forced cheerfulness. He came to the foot of the bed and stood there irresolutely. "Mame said you didn't have a good night, but you're looking fine."

The elder Vanaman's mouth tightened. "Don't lie to me," he answered; his voice was clear and calm. "I'm not lookin' fine—and no more are you."

"Oh, I'm all right." Charley shifted his weight from one foot to the other. "A little indigestion, that's all. Had grouse for dinner, and I ate—"

"*Atel*!" The word was an accusation. "How's your invention comin' on?"

Charley brightened.

"If you'll only put up the money I asked you about—" he began.

"Seen Mrs. Trent lately?"

"I—no—" The son's cheeks became brick red. "I wish you'd let me explain about her," he said.

"I don't need explanations," the old man answered. "What I want is actions. I told you not to have anything to do with her. I know what she is."

"She's a lady!" protested Charley.

"She's a married woman," said his father quietly. "I won't have you runnin' around with married women."

"She's getting a divorce."

"Well, there's only one thing worse than a married woman—and that's a woman who's divorced."

"What else could she do?" Charley pleaded. "Her husband was a brute."

"So *she* says."

"He didn't deny it. He didn't contest the case."

"Maybe he was too much of a man, Charley."

"He's too much of a dog. He did begin a cross-suit, and he had to drop it."

Under the covers the old man's legs fidgeted.

"He named you in it," said he.

"But I tell you he dropped it. He hadn't any evidence. Besides—"

"Charley," said the father, "you can't talk this way to me. I've lived too long. I know what lies a woman can threaten to tell, and if she's good-lookin' they're worse ones. When she does threaten to tell 'em, it isn't only a

matter of 'no evidence' that'll make a man drop his cross-suit. Now don't let me hear any more about it; you keep away from that woman, or you don't get another cent out of me."

He had said it often before, but he said it now with an air of finality that deepened his son's fear. When Charley was afraid he grew angry. Moreover, the young man was in love; he knew both the need of money and the fact that Edith would be displeased if he were late for his appointment with her.

"Why?" he demanded.

"Because she's a bad lot," said the father.

The son's froglike eyes blinked redly, but his tone was sincere. "She's the best woman in the world!" he affirmed.

That tone betrayed him. The elder Vanaman's sharp gaze read the younger's mind.

"Don't tell me you want to marry her," said he.

"You don't understand!" he cried. "You're too old-fashioned. You can't see that the world's grown any since you were young. If you'd only take the trouble to listen to the evidence in the Trent case; if—"

His father drew a slow arm from beneath the bedclothes. He raised a transparent hand and shook a skinny forefinger at his son.

"Charley," he said, "I've got to have quiet. You'd better go. But if you marry that woman, I won't leave you a cent, so help me God!"

III

SOMEWHERE, in the starlit seas of space, are there stars that are both brown and bright? Charley, who was in most matters no poet, always asked himself that question when he thought of Edith Trent's eyes. To say merely that they were brown was to say so little of them as to say almost nothing at all; they were like stars, and yet they were like no stars that he had ever seen.

He often wondered how he could describe her. Like most men without a literary bent, he had no doubt of his

literary abilities. He had been called upon a hundred times to describe the complicated improvement for the telegraphic sounder that he had invented, and in this he could always make himself clear. But Edith—there his powers of description failed. She was tall and dark; the lines of the hips were generous; the curve of her breast awakened his memories of boy-read mythology and the stories of goddesses that walked the earth and condescended to the loves of men. At such times he thought of her as a woman with the body of Aphrodite and the face of Artemis. He thought of her forehead as broad and low, of her lips as being as passionate as they were firm; he thought of the pink wave that would climb from her shoulder to her cheek in much the terms in which Homer thought of the dawn. But of her eyes he always thought as of stars.

When he entered the living room of her apartment Olympus that morning—she had long since moved across town from Jim's address—he found the goddess somewhat wrathful.

"You're late," said Edith. "Where on earth have you been all this time?"

Charley had one of his rare moments of inspiration.

"That's just it," he said: "I've been on earth, and it's a long way from earth to heaven."

His eyes sought her hungrily. She had not risen from the pillow-heaped couch on which she was lying when he let himself into the apartments with the key that, when she rented them, she had given him. The long folds of a canary-colored kimono clung eagerly to her body. They showed the lines he loved; they drew back from the ruffle of a canary-colored petticoat, bringing to view lithe ankles cased in silk stockings of the same shade and crossed little feet in high-heeled slippers to match. The kimono fell far away from the base of her throat; and, framing the oval of her dark face, tumbled black strands of her still disordered hair.

Vanaman, with movements too rapid for a man of his bulk, put his hat and overcoat on the nearest chair and crossed to her. He sat on the edge of the couch

and, almost roughly, forced his arm about her waist and drew her head to his shoulder. His left hand seized her left hand.

"Edith!" he whispered.

He tried to raise her head toward his, but she held back, so he lowered it until it rested on his elbow. Thus he sat for a moment looking into the veiled stars that were her eyes.

"Edith!" he whispered again.

As an eagle fastens on its prey, he darted his lips to hers.

But the kiss ended abruptly.

"What's the matter?" he asked. He sat upright now.

She shook the wonderful masses of her hair.

"Nothing."

"Something's wrong, I know."

"Well," she pouted, "I told you you were late."

"I overslept."

"You drank too much last night," said Edith composedly.

"How could I help it?" He did not like criticism, even from a quiet goddess, and his tone seemed now to imply that the fault of his intemperance lay at her door. "This thing's got so on my nerves that I've got to do something."

"Your nerves?" She raised her level brows. "What do you think it must do to mine?"

"I know; but you drank your share."

"My share didn't go to my head."

Charley repeated that petulant wriggling of the shoulders with which he had met his sister's appeal.

"It was Jim taught me to drink," he said. "I think sometimes he did it to get square. They say he isn't drinking a bit now."

The mention of the absent man seemed to drop a veil between the lovers, who were yet as much bound together by their common hatred of that man as they were by their passion for each other. They drew unconsciously apart.

"They're not telling the truth," said Edith.

"I don't know about that." Charley shook his round head. "It would be just like his devilishness to quit for

good." He reflected on this. "Jim'll want to show people that we lied."

"Nobody will believe him, no matter what he does," Edith quietly interrupted. "There is the testimony that he never denied, and, anyhow, people always believe a woman. All we have to do is to be careful."

Charley heaved the sigh of one that makes a supreme sacrifice.

"All right," he said, smacking his knee with his fat hand. "I'll just promise you one thing: from the minute you get your decree, I'll never take another drink."

"Nothing?" she inquired.

"Well, not whiskey, anyhow; only a glass of beer now and then, and perhaps a little white wine with my dinner." He thought that he saw a cloud of doubt dim the brightness of her eyes. "I mean it," he affirmed. "You just wait and see."

Edith had drawn a pillow away from him when they began to speak of her husband. She put it behind her now and sat in the center of the couch. She did not comment on his declaration.

"You believe me, don't you?" asked Vanaman.

"Oh, I suppose so," said Edith. Her fingers were busy with an invisible spot on her canary kimono, and her eyes followed her fingers.

Charley tried to take her hand.

"You'll promise the same?" he urged.

"I? Why should I?" Her gaze met him fairly, but her hand retreated and escaped. "I never take too much."

"I know, dear, but you might some time."

"I'm too careful."

"You can't tell. I used to think I was. And when we're married—well, you never know what it'll lead you to."

Edith smiled a world-old smile.

"I know what it led you to," she said. "That first evening, when Jim was out of town, if you hadn't had one drink more than you needed, you wouldn't have had the courage to say what you did."

"No," chuckled Charley; "and every time you went on the witness stand—"

"Are you sorry for that?" she challenged.

"Are you sorry I said what I did on that first evening?" countered he.

He bent toward her, but her eyes caught the telephone that stood on a table beside the wall opposite them.

"Why doesn't Schultz send us word?" she asked.

Charley checked himself.

"I suppose the judge hasn't handed down the decree yet."

The white knuckles of Edith's right hand tapped the back of the couch impatiently, but she mastered herself.

"How is your father this morning?" she asked.

"He had a bad night."

"I'm sorry."

"Yes." Charley spoke in the dual role of a sympathetic son and a man of the world. "But of course he will never be any better. I don't want him to die; I'd do anything I could to save him, only there isn't anything to be done. He doesn't like you, Edith."

Mrs. Trent's beautiful eyes were pained.

"I know," said she. "I did my best, but he never cared much about me. I hope it hasn't set him against you."

"Would it—" Charley gulped at a lump in his throat. He looked at her with a high appeal. "Would it matter to you, dear, if he did turn against me?"

It was Edith who now made the advance. She put out a hand and lightly touched his cheek.

"You silly boy! Of course it wouldn't. But he won't turn—and we do have to have some money to live, don't we?"

Charley understood her. He was in love, and so he lied freely.

"Well," he said, "it hasn't set him against me anyhow. Half the estate goes to me under the present will, and there's no chance of a change." After all, he reflected, the chance was small.

"And the new sounder?" Edith pursued.

"We can put it on the market just as soon as we get the capital. Then we'll be more than well-to-do: we'll be rich. I remember one time when I was working in the government telegraph office in Pekin—"

He believed in his invention. He believed that, even should his father live long enough to discover the necessity of carrying out the threat of a new will, that sounder would save the day. But he was afraid to tell Edith of this; he wanted to be sure of her, and his love for her was of such a sort that the more he loved the less certain of her he could be. So he fell to diverting her attention by the sort of narration that she most enjoyed: the not always authentic stories of adventures in the strange lands in which, as a wandering inventor under passing parental displeasure, he had spent five years of his life.

She listened to him, but this morning her eyes were all for the telephone. Her inner ear sat alert for the first tinkle of the bell that would announce their freedom.

Charley broke off in the middle of a description of a midnight ride through the Boxer lines.

"But I can't talk about that now," he said. "This is too much like waiting for the jury to come in."

"The jury?" Edith found the simile ominous. "When there's a jury there's some doubt, isn't there? But in our case— You don't mean that anything could upset our plans?"

Charley was too nervous to conceal his fears.

"N—no," he said. "Only it's always just possible that, somehow or other, word might get to the judge—"

"How can it?"

"It's not likely. But, you must know, Edith, some of these judges are just old women; and if this fellow happened to hear that you and I—that we—"

"He can't learn that. Nobody suspects. Nobody in this house knows who I am."

"Well, then, he might find some flaw in the testimony."

"There isn't any flaw to find."

"Yes, I know; but maybe it's too flawless. Sometimes I wonder if it isn't so flawless that it sounds faked."

Edith's brows contracted.

"We had to do that," she declared. "Schultz himself said so. Over half of

it he suggested to us by his questions: it was his fault. He said we couldn't win unless we did. You know, Charley, how he led us on. We just couldn't prove what was true, so we had to prove what wasn't. You don't suppose—" Her under lip trembled. "Charley!" she sobbed.

He took her into his arms and comforted her. He denied all the fears that he had so lately expressed. He kissed her, at first tenderly and then, as her red lips responded, with more and more fervor.

Suddenly fear fell from them as a cloak might fall from shaken shoulders. Fear fell from them, and within them rose, beating in their temples and straining at their throats, the passion that had first drawn them together, the desire, so often temporarily satisfied but never permanently satiated, which, beginning in the days when Edith Trent considered herself the neglected wife of an artist too much engrossed in his art, had dragged the one of them through the divorce court, had turned the other to bear false witness, and had brought them both to this apartment and this waiting for a judgment in favor of all that they had done.

Vanaman's right arm was wound about her waist with a grip of steel; his left was round her firm neck. Her head was thrown against the heaped cushions of the couch; her black hair descended about her face and half veiled her glowing cheeks, her panting bosom, her parted lips, her burning eyes. There was, for them, no reason for denial; for a year and more denial had been unknown between them. Charley bent his face; his mouth closed on hers. He held her tighter. He drew back only to gasp her name:

"Edith!"

A bell rang. It was crisp, clear. It was from the world that they were forgetting. It was as if the walls of their room had fallen and left these lovers visible to all that world.

They leaped apart.

Charley, in a trembling voice, swore an habitual oath. The woman was more collected.

"The 'phone!" she said with quick realization. "That's Schultz."

Vanaman went to the telephone. If his hand had shaken when, a few hours earlier, he began to telephone to Edith, it shook more violently now.

"Hello! Hello! Hello!" he said.

In the little black receiver at his ear the answer danced and rattled.

"Hello!" said the answer. "Hudson one-two-nine-three?"

"Yes."

"Mrs. Trent there?"

"Yes, yes."

"Ask her to the 'phone, please."

"This is Mr. Vanaman," said Charley, with what dignity he could get into his tone.

But the black receiver was firm.

"I want to talk to Mrs. Trent."

"Who is this?" asked Charley.

"Mr. Schultz, her lawyer," said the receiver.

"Well, won't I do?"

"You will not. You've had too much to do with this case already. I want to talk to my client."

Charley put his fat pink palm over the transmitter and held the receiver toward Edith.

"It's Schultz," he said, his lips pale and his voice shaking. "He wants to talk to you."

Edith rose. She, too, was pale. Her former fears had returned to her.

"Charley," she whispered, "it's not—oh, you don't think it's bad news?"

He tried to say "I don't know," but, though his lips moved, he said nothing audible.

"Won't he talk to you?" she begged.

Vanaman shook his head.

She seized the receiver.

"This is Mrs. Trent, Mr. Schultz," said she, and a moment later she was glad that it was she alone who heard the lawyer's remarks.

"Mrs. Trent," said the distant attorney, in a slow, even tone, "I want to say that I took this case because of my friendship for your dead father, and once in it I held on. This is not my type of practice, and you know it. If I had not been too deeply committed before I knew where I was, I'd have got

out long ago. I'd have got out anyhow if your husband had fought the suit. Never mind about my fee; I couldn't touch a penny of it. Now that this thing is over, I merely want to tell you that I thoroughly understand what you and that fellow Vanaman have done to an innocent man—thoroughly. The court has just signed your decree. I'm sending a certified copy up by messenger. You are a free woman. Good-bye."

For a few seconds after the lawyer had rung off, Edith, paler still, stood with the receiver to her ear. Then she slowly hung it up and faced her lover.

He was looking at her. His face, too, was white; his wide mouth was half open, and his froglike eyes gaped. She had never before thought that he might appear grotesque.

"What—what is it?" he mumbled. "What did he say?"

"Nothing," she answered, speaking calmly now. "Nothing—except that the decree has been signed—and he feels so under obligations to my father that he can't take any money. We can be married in Jersey City this afternoon."

With a strident shout he tottered toward her. He spread his arms wide. She leaned to him, but, as they met, something seemed to have gone out of them. The kisses that the telephone bell had interrupted had no repetition. His arms, instead of encircling her, fell, and only his hands met hers. He raised her hands between his own. They stood looking at each other. Slowly he lifted her fingers and kissed them. His lips were cold.

"Where's the whiskey?" he asked. "I think we deserve just one more drink. Let's celebrate this once. We've earned it."

IV

WE Americans believe in divorce and mistrust the divorced. We mistrust them so much that it behooves a petitioner to place all the blame on the shoulders of the respondent, if the petitioner hopes at all to retain a place in society.

Edith Trent and Charley Vanaman

had inherited neither enough wealth nor enough social position to be able to brave conventions. They were conventional people wanting to do conventionally a more or less unconventional thing. To do it they had therefore tacitly recognized the necessity of a conspiracy that would leave Jim in the position of a brutal and libertine husband and show Edith to the world in the role of the long-suffering wife protected by a wholly chivalrous friend.

They had succeeded. They had accomplished the perfect perjury. Jim had kept his word. Only once, when he happened to hear that he was being charged before the master with infamies that were supererogatory, Jim entered a counter-suit, but this the tearful repentances of his wife led him speedily to withdraw, and now, with the signing of the divorce decree in Edith's favor, Jim, as a real presence, should have vanished from the life of his wife and his wife's lover. Edith was a vindicated woman, free to go where her heart listed; Charley's reputation was, at least legally, sustained. These two were sincerely, even tremendously, in love with each other; with no faith whatever in the theory that a successful crime cannot be a bond between the criminals, but must always be a barrier because it is a crime, they had but to marry to live as happily ever after as the princess and the prince in all good fairy tales.

And they were married on the afternoon that followed the news of Edith's freedom. Somewhat amazedly, Charley found himself borne off to Jersey City and made a husband before he had the time or the courage to indicate to Edith the purely material difficulties that might still beset them.

They left the magistrate's office in silence. Somehow the legal ceremony there had seemed to each of them a little lacking in the dignity that their conventional souls and their warm affection counted requisite. Their nerves had, for a long time, been on an ugly strain, for the details of the divorce had been more trying, the need of lies more frequent, than they had anticipated, and

now their exit was not, they felt, of the sort that is generally supposed to be hymeneal.

"Well," said Edith at last, "that's settled, anyhow."

Charley nodded, and for a moment neither spoke. Then the man looked at the woman, and, feeding on her, his enthusiasm revived.

"I think," he chuckled, as she took his arm, which bent to compress her clasping fingers, "we ought to celebrate this somehow. What do you say to a bottle of champagne—just one—between us?"

Edith's reply was more matter-of-fact than sentimental:

"I think it would do me good," she said.

They had it as soon as they reached New York. They went to a quiet café on Sixth Avenue and there sat side by side at a little corner table.

Charley raised his glass and clinked it against hers. Then he turned the glass so that their fingers touched.

"Here," he said—"here's to us!"

Her eyes met his and glowed.

"To us," she softly echoed.

"Long life and happiness!" said Charley.

"And success!" she added, smiling. "Don't forget the success of the invention, dear."

He drained his glass; she sipped at hers. For some time they talked of the indifferent things that are so important to lovers.

"I've been thinking," she said at last, "about where we're going to live. There's been no time to talk about it, but I've been thinking."

"Eh?" said Vanaman.

"Of course I understand," Edith explained, "how it is that, just now, you can't leave town because of the invention, and I don't a bit mind making our wedding journey a stay at some good hotel; but while we're there I'll have to look around for some nice apartments."

It was characteristic of him not to have thought of this; it was characteristic of her to have thought of it and, assuming it her own province, to have said nothing about it until now.

"What's the matter with the apartments that you have?" asked Charley.

"They're swell enough, aren't they?"

"Oh, we can't live there. I thought you understood that."

"What's wrong with the place?"

"Nothing, dear; but everybody there has seen you coming in and going out ever since I first rented it."

The reason was sufficient, as Edith's reasons always were; but it left Vanaman embarrassed.

"Well, we can't go to my place," he said a little awkwardly.

The brown stars that were her eyes searched him quickly.

"I wouldn't think of doing that. I always said no one man's house was big enough to hold two families. But that's not your reason. What is your reason?"

Charley wriggled. He felt that it was too bad that such a small difference should arise at such a time, and Edith agreed with him. Nevertheless, the first fervor of passion had preceded even the divorce; they were not, in the ordinary sense, newly married people, and this difficulty, unseen on one side and concealed on the other, had at once somehow to be resolved.

"You know well enough how things are at my place," said Charley.

"You mean your father doesn't like me?"

"I mean he's old-fashioned and prejudiced. You've always understood how it was."

"That was before there was the—before I was divorced, dear—and it was before we were married."

Charley grunted out one of his short laughs.

"In other words, it was yesterday."

"Yes; but whatever he used to think of me, I'm his son's wife now."

He pressed her hand. "Of course you are—forever and forever. But you've got to remember that, according to the old man's notions, we're sort of sudden."

Edith's manner did not change. Her gaze was steady, and, as she emptied her glass, her hand was steady, too; but her sensitive nostrils dilated and her voice

was dry as, looking into his eyes, she said quietly:

"You haven't told him that we meant to be married."

"Oh, Edith, you don't understand—or, rather, you won't. You know perfectly well that we—"

"How did you think you could hide it from him?"

"I wasn't going to hide it from him. I wanted it to be over and done with before I told him, that's all. Don't you see?"

"But you were going to put off telling him for a few days? You weren't going to tell him right away?"

"Oh, well, Edith, you must see for yourself that if we only waited till—"

Edith rose from the table.

"We'll go up and tell him now," she said.

V

MAME met them at the door of the Vanaman house, her vapid face somewhat aghast at the sight of her brother's companion.

"You—won't you both come into the parlor?" she asked.

She led the way to the dim room furnished in the style of the seventies. Charley was rather glad of the respite, but he asked:

"How's father?"

"You didn't—you didn't want to see him?" faltered Mame.

"Of course I did."

"But he's—he's very low, Charley. He had a sort of sinking spell after you left this morning. Besides, when he got a little better he made me—I don't know why—telephone for Mr. Zoller."

"What!" said Charley. His jaw dropped.

"Who's Mr. Zoller?" Edith inquired, but she guessed the answer.

"It's his lawyer," explained Charley. "Is he up there now, Mame?"

Mame nodded.

"Charley—" began Edith.

But Charley raised his hand.

"Just a moment, please," he said.

"Is it—" He wet his dry lips. "Is it a new will, Mame?"

"No. At least, I don't think it is, Charley." She looked helplessly from her brother to Edith. "But he's in no condition to be interrupted, whatever it is. If you don't mind—if Mrs. Trent will excuse us—"

Edith came a step forward and put out her hand. Her face was tender.

"If I can be of any help," she said, "you must give me a chance. I am not Mrs. Trent any more. I have been granted a divorce from that terrible man, and I am—I am your brother's wife, my dear."

Poor Mame's face was incapable of concealing strong emotion. What it showed was something uncommonly close to horror.

"His—you're married?" She did not seem to see Edith's proffered hand. Her frightened eyes sought her brother. "Oh, Charley!" she whispered.

He had to interfere; he did not want to see the woman he loved treated in any but the most cordial manner.

"Of course we're married," said he.

"But, Charley—"

"Just a moment, please. Why are you surprised? You must have known all along that I intended to do this. I made it as clear as I could without—without saying it in so many words before Edith was legally free of the brute that had been her husband. Mame—he looked at her threateningly—"aren't you glad?"

It was patent that Mame was not glad; she was ready for tears; but she fought bravely with her impulse and overcame it. Murmuring some platitude about her pleasure and seeking to excuse her embarrassment by a word about the suddenness of the news, she took Edith's hand at last; she even kissed her new sister-in-law's cheek.

Edith was radiant. She returned the caress warmly.

"I love him," she whispered, and she blushed prettily as she whispered it.

The entrance of a maid saved Mame from immediate reply.

"Mr. Vanaman is asking for you, Miss Vanaman," said the servant. "He wants you right away."

Charley caught Edith's eye.

"Shall I go along?" he asked.

At that Mame's face grew utterly white. She gasped in unconcealed terror.

"It wouldn't do," she said as soon as she was sure that the maid was out of hearing. "It'd be the worst thing for both of you. You know you're counting on his help to finance the invention, and if you told him— Forgive me, Edith, but he's an old man, and if Charley—"

"I'll do what I like," said Charley.

"No, no," pleaded Mame. "You know how upset he was by your talk this morning. If he saw you again, he might have another sinking spell."

"He's my father," said Charley doggedly.

It was Edith that came to Mame's rescue. She saw the practical danger and changed her plans instantly.

"I think your sister is right," she declared. She nodded calmly to Mame, who, her victory shorn of some of its pleasure because it was bought by another woman's influence over Charley, hurried upstairs and left husband and wife together.

Charley, however, was puzzled.

"Why did you do that?" he asked.

"Can't you see, dear?" she countered.

"No, I can't. One minute you want me to come up here and face them, and the next you hold me off. I can't see it at all."

"It's because you convinced me." She stilled his annoyance by the touch of her slim hand upon his arm. "You and your sister and the whole situation here. I didn't realize it till I got here. Somebody used to say that I never could understand a stone wall until I had struck my head against it. I've struck this stone wall now."

The quotation, or the confession that it was a quotation, proved unfortunate. Charley's annoyance revived.

"Who used to say that?" he inquired.

"Never mind who, dear. The point is that it's the truth."

"I suppose it was Jim."

She had not quoted Jim; she had quoted another man—a man that Charley had not known; but she realized now that to say so would entail explanations.

"What if it was Jim?" she asked. "You don't have to be told what I think of him."

"I know I don't; but I'm sick and tired of hearing him. I don't want ever to have to think of him again."

She kissed him. "You won't have to think of him ever again," she promised. "And now do try to see why I kept you down here in the parlor. I guessed well enough from what your sister said that you had some little quarrel with your father about me this morning, and I know how much our whole future depends on keeping his good will. You've converted me to your opinion of what we ought to do, dear."

She spoke truly enough there. Brought face to face with the actual conditions of the Vanaman household—a household with which she had never been intimate, and to which she had been almost a stranger since its head began to suspect his son's liking for her—she realized the folly of the anger and defiance that had forced her to demand her husband's immediate acknowledgment of her new status to old Vanaman. Charley lived on the paternal allowance; he built his future on the expected success of his telegraphic invention, and his only present hope of floating that invention lay in a winning over of his father to a faith in him and the sounder equal to his own faith. Something of these facts, obscured by the sanguine views of his ingenuity that are the aura of every inventor, Charley had long ago put before her, but the extent of the father's power and the inability of her charms to overcome his prejudices were not brought home to Edith until she heard in Mame's tones the terror inspired by Charley's implied determination to tell the elder Vanaman of the marriage.

"I wish you could have been converted sooner," grumbled Charley.

"How could I, dear? You didn't say that he'd cut you out of his will if I— if we married."

"Oh, he won't cut me out of his will if I'm only given a little time to break this to him gently."

"Then you shall have the time," said

Edith. She put her arms about his neck. "I'll be good. I'll leave you to go up to him when he's stronger, and I'll run along and meet you at Martin's for dinner. My bag's packed and can be sent for from there. At eight o'clock, dear. Don't be late, but do remember how much depends on your being nice to him. We'll keep it all quiet until—until you can bring him 'round. And find out, if you can, what he wanted to see his lawyer about."

She kissed him again and left him, and Charley, only partially pacified, paced the gloomy parlor until Mame returned to it. Mame was crying.

"Well?" he demanded.

"He's better," said Mame. "Dr. Morley was there; that's why they wanted me."

"Was Zoller still with him?"

"He was just going. Dr. Morley says—I asked him right out, Charley, for I thought anything was better than this suspense—and he says he may live several months—father may, I mean—but that"—her sobs shook her—"but that it can't have any end except—except—"

Charley Vanaman bent and kissed his sister.

"I'm sorry, Mame," he said; "but, after all, it's only what we've really looked for. We must just do the best we can to make him comfortable in the meantime."

She looked up at him beseechingly.

"If he heard of your—about you and Mrs. Trent—"

"You mean about Edith. For heaven's sake do stop connecting her with Jim Trent!"

"About you and Edith, I mean, Charley—if father heard about that, it would be a shock, and the doctor said any shock might kill him immediately."

"H'm," said Charley. He took a short turn of the room. When he spoke again, his back was toward her. "Do you think you can keep tomorrow's papers away from him? The news of this wedding's not important enough to be in more than one issue. I was going to ask you to do this before, only Edith thought otherwise—until she understood how really sick he was, of course."

"Yes, I can keep them from him. Oh"—Mame brightened—"will you do it, Charley? Your part, I mean. Will you?"

"Yes," he said, turning at last; "I will. The way you put it, it's my plain duty."

"Oh, thank you, Charley; thank you! You *are* good, and—and, Charley, I will love Edith, and I do hope you'll be very happy!"

"Oh, that's all right. Don't thank me. But I want you to do something for me. Find out if that paper that old Zoller was here about was a new will."

"I'll try."

"And if it is, try and find out what's in it, will you?"

She nodded.

"Oh, and I say, Mame, can you lend me twenty dollars? I'll be a little short till tomorrow, when my allowance is due."

VI

THE days that slowly lengthened themselves into months began not unhappily for Edith Vanaman and her new husband. They had long ago discounted the delicious surprises of a life together led by two persons desperately in love, but, though they had made the mistake of choosing each other for no reason save that of their passion, their circumstances developed two interests that they could and did share in common: they wanted the invention to succeed, and they wanted the elder Vanaman's money. These interests, however, gradually became one. As the time dragged on, it seemed more and more evident that the money required to launch the sounder was not to be had from without, and so more and more evident that their hope lay in Charley's undoubtedly dying but slowly dying father. So, little by little, the invention, which had formed the chief topic of their intimate conversations, gave place to long speculations regarding old man Vanaman's inclinations and old man Vanaman's will.

"You're sure he hasn't guessed that

we're married?" Edith would daily inquire.

And Charley would daily answer:

"I'm sure of it. I've told him I had to live away from home because I had to be near my work. It's even a duty to him," the husband sincerely added, "because, as Mame says, a shock might kill him."

Did Edith want him to die? She never told her husband that this question suggested itself to her, and she was never sure of its true answer. She feared death, at any rate, above every other terror; she would not have wished death even for Jim; and she certainly did not want Mr. Vanaman to die if his will had been changed to Charley's hurt. There came a time when she was somewhat annoyed by her husband's inability to discover whether a new will had been drawn. On one or two occasions she even quarreled with him on account of his failure.

"Why don't you ask him?" she demanded.

"That'd only put the idea in his head," Charley gloomily assured her.

"Then can't you get Mame to find out? He's devoted to Mame."

"I've tried that. I've told you I've tried. He just won't say."

"And you can't get him to advance anything?"

"Not beyond my regular allowance. He says he doesn't know enough about telegraphy. He says if I can interest some expert, he'll cough up."

"I don't see why you can't interest an expert," Edith would reply.

Then the quarrel would begin. Charley, always sanguine for the merits of his invention and always proud of his abilities to convince anybody of anything, would try to explain the intricacies of the telegraphic situation that, for the moment only, delayed success. Edith, listening but little and basing her argument upon the question of sheer merit, either could not or would not understand. It was a period of long suspense, and they agreed at least upon one thing concerning it: they agreed that it furnished excuse for seeking relief

in a postponement of the time when Charley should give up liquor.

"If only I could see your father, I know I could bring him 'round," said Edith.

"I've done my best," Charley declared, "and he simply won't have it. If I tried any harder he'd begin to suspect, and that would be the end of us forever."

So week followed monotonous week, and the suspense was slowly pulled to a straining tension. Charley had a small office downtown from which he wrote verbose letters to capitalists and to which he invited possible helpers to see and test his instrument. It was a task that so appeared to be in vain as at last to wear even on his nerves, and its failure more than once sharpened Edith's tongue to bitter criticism.

Edith, all day long, had nothing to do in the rather shabby apartments that they had been forced to select far uptown. She cooked the meals, which she hated, and she repaired their clothes; but she hurried through these things and slighted them, and she found the afternoons hang heavily. One of her woman friends, up to whom she rushed in the street, had cut her, presumably because of the mere mention of Charley in that counter-suit which Jim had started and withdrawn; a few others, to whom she thought of speaking, had looked the other way. If she mentioned these affronts to Charley, when he came home tired from work, he was apt to be angry and remind her that she had once told him Jim would never bring, even if he did later drop it, that counter-suit. So she abandoned the practice of bearing these tales, and resolved to wait until the triumph of the invention placed her, where she now was not, in a position to make new friends. She even did not tell him of having heard one of her neighbors in the apartment house refer to her as "that divorced woman," and she began to pass her spare time in wandering upon shopping expeditions during which she did not shop because she had not money and from which she returned unhappy from the pangs of unsatisfied envy.

Charley's lot was little better. He felt

as bitterly as did his wife, the pangs of his unrewarded business endeavors, and he nursed to his heart the several snubs that gradually compelled him to desert the only club of which he was a member. He was sustained solely by his confidence in the ultimate triumph of his invention.

"Let 'em wait," he would say to himself. "They'll come crawling to me on their knees when I'm rich, and then it'll be me that throws them down."

So, in short, both husband and wife were waiting. For their evenings, they were thrown entirely upon each other, and since no man and woman that ever lived can pass every evening in rapturous declarations of affection, Edith's talk and Charley's concerned itself less and less with their passion and more and more with the financial possibilities of the future. Their relief was alcoholic; the whiskey became an increasing necessity.

Two things at last happened simultaneously: Charley's father, growing steadily weaker, became peevish because Charley did not pass more time under the paternal roof, and Charley, nervously alert to trouble, because of the worry that breeds worry, commenced to note and resent in his wife's talk certain words and twists of phrase that were undoubtedly unconscious reminiscences of Jim. Weariness and policy combined to move the husband; he passed two or three evenings of each week in his father's house and, for these evenings at least, left Edith alone.

It was on a morning following one of these evenings that, at their hurried breakfast—for their breakfasts were always hurried—Edith, who habitually preempted the newspaper, put down that sheet with a gasp.

"Well," she said, "I never!"

Charley looked across at her with his prominent eyes haggard. Edith's hair was disordered and her kimono scarcely fresh; she looked her age.

"What's wrong?" asked Charley.

She handed him the paper, indicating with her thumb a small item of news.

Charley read:

JAMES TRENT MARRIED

RIISING YOUNG ARTIST WEDS
MISS CICELY BOWEN

James Trent, the rising young portrait painter whose picture of Bishop Peel won such high praise at last month's exhibition of the American Society of Portraiture, was quietly married yesterday afternoon to Miss Cicely Bowen, only daughter of Theodore Howard Bowen, the well known yachtsman. Only a few persons, all immediate relatives, were present. Miss Bowen is herself an enthusiastic sailor and has a rare talent for miniature painting. Mr. and Mrs. Trent are sailing today on the *Schleswig-Holstein* for a long stay abroad.

Charley put down the paper without comment, but his face was black.

"What do you think of that?" Edith shrilly demanded. "He's actually had the nerve to marry some nice girl—and some nice girl with money, too!"

"I don't think anything," said Charley sharply. "I haven't got time to waste on such people. It'll come to no good, that's sure."

He went away to work with the briefest of kisses, but he left his wife thinking:

"Am I always going to be reminded of that man? He's married again—actually. And she must have money. And the papers don't say I divorced him: they don't even say he's been divorced!"

All through that uncommonly long day, she felt that Jim had somehow tricked her: that he had tricked her by his marriage since she had been sure that she had made another marriage impossible to him, and that he had secured the publication of this notice for no reason but her annoyance. She was as certain as Charley that the marriage would not turn out well. That evening, when the topic obtruded itself into their usually wearisome discussion of the invention's prospects and Mr. Vanaman's will, she said so to her husband.

"I'm really sorry for the girl, whoever she is," Edith declared. "The poor thing doesn't know what she's got."

Charley, pouring himself a drink of whiskey, chuckled a grim assent. The pair had long ago reached the point of believing all that they had once sworn to be true of Jim.

"Of course it was some newspaper

friend that printed the account of the wedding," Charley supplemented.

"Rising young artist!" Edith scornfully commented. "He'll probably starve in a garret after this wife has got rid of him."

"Sure he will," agreed Charley. "People'll find out what he is. No fear of that." He took another drink with a shaking hand. Both he and his wife were, for the first time, silently realizing what an important part in their mental lives this man had been playing ever since they combined to ruin him and swear him out of their existence. Charley handed Edith a glass, which she eagerly drained. "I guess his picture of that bishop didn't amount to much," Vanaman concluded. "I never heard of it."

"You?" She spoke quickly and from mere nervous excitement, but her tone was scornful. "Of course not. You don't know anything about pictures."

Instantly the fires of Charley's anger and jealousy were alight.

"Of course I don't," he snapped. "I'm a man, and do a man's work. Pictures! Where did you learn anything about them? All you ever knew you got from him. Perhaps you'd like to go back to him and learn more!"

It took another hour and almost a pint of whiskey to heal the wound thus made.

VII

EVEN with the wound healed, Edith all next day fumed at Jim, who was in her mind the conscious cause of it. She hurried through her work, despising every task. Before her solitary lunch, she took a drink of whiskey to give her an appetite, and after lunch she took another to settle her digestion.

She set out upon a more than ordinarily tiresome and envious tour of the shops. She was worn out by the anxiety concerning her husband's prospects, and she was morbidly bitter against Jim.

It was quite half past four when she found herself within walking distance of Charley's office. He had often told her about it and often asked her to visit it,

but hitherto she had declined to go there, saying that she had too much to do at home, yet inwardly fearing to find there some overt signs of failure. Now, on a sudden impulse, she decided to quiet the disturbance in her mind by a call at the place. She would see it, get Charley and take him home with her.

She went up in the elevator to the highest floor, and searched until she found an inconspicuous door conspicuously labeled: "The Vanaman Telegraphic Sounder." Edith turned the brass doorknob and entered.

It was a very small room, the walls hung with blueprints and designs. Hard by the single window stood Charley's rolltop desk, closed. In the center of the room was a long table upon which, amid a pile of disordered papers, stood a telegraphic instrument enhanced by a Vanaman Sounder; and close to the door, under an electric light, a man, a caller strange to Edith, stood beside a typewriter table at which, her fingers idly toying with the keys of the writing machine, sat the girl that must, the wife surmised, be Charley's stenographer.

She was a girl of a type so rare in New York as to be worth any man's second glance. In the Bordeaux country, and especially in Bordeaux itself, her sort is the rule, but it is a sort that seldom emigrates. She was short and robust, trimly corseted, yet generously developed. Her dark dress was cut low at the base of the neck and displayed a throat that seemed made of warm ivory. Her full mouth was a vivid red and her round cheeks were pink, but the rest of her face was marvelously white, a white soft and firm and white as her throat, all splendid in its contrast to her thick, low-combed, jet black hair.

Edith felt an uncomfortable emotion.

"Mr. Vanaman?" she inquired, for the stenographer had not troubled to look up at her entrance.

"Out," said the girl, and went on talking to the caller, who, it seemed to Edith, must have come to meet not Charley but the girl.

"When will he be back?" persisted Edith.

The girl glanced apologetically at her caller and turned a bored face, for the merest moment, toward her questioner.

"I don't know. He's never certain."

"Soon?"

"Perhaps in fifteen minutes; perhaps not for half an hour."

"Very well," said Edith; "I think I'll wait."

She sat down beside the table and tried to look at the model, a duplicate of which was in her parlor at home. But her glance wandered back again and again toward the softly chattering and laughing stenographer, of whose conversation she was, however, unable to catch any save the most casual words.

The man at last turned away. Edith, who generally had an appraising eye for men, had seen nothing of this one except that he was tall and slim—rather of Jim's build, she scornfully thought—and that he had a dark face. But now, as he left the room, the wife got her best look at the girl. The stenographer was gazing intently at the man, and her eyes, under black brows and long, curling black lashes, were big and soft and black; they were the melting eyes that melt hearts, and they looked at the departing caller with a meaning that Edith, out of her own experience, found it impossible to misconstrue.

When the caller had gone, the stenographer, without a word to Edith, began to clatter at the typewriter. Charley's wife sat in silence until, ten minutes later, Charley himself appeared.

"Hello," he said to the typist as he entered; and then, seeing Edith, "Hello," he said in another, but no less easy tone. "This is good! How long have you been here?"

"A half-hour," said Edith. Her tone was cool. She had seen something that she distinctly disliked: when Charley came in, his stenographer had looked at him precisely as she had looked at the man that had left a short time before. It did not count with Edith that Charley had not returned the glance: no doubt he had seen his wife in time to prevent that. "Are you leaving soon?" she added.

"Right away," said Charley. "But

don't you want me to show you the office first?"

"No, thanks. I've had plenty of time to see it while I was waiting for you."

The stenographer had risen and was pinning on her hat, her hands raised above her head in woman's most attractive pose. Hers was a large black hat and becoming.

"Mr. Tyrrell was here, Mr. Vanaman," she said.

"Eh? Oh, that's too bad!" Charley was obviously disappointed. "Missed him—and his first visit, too. Did he say he'd come again?"

"He said he might call again tomorrow."

Edith's voice interrupted this exchange of business details.

"I think he will be sure to come back," said she.

Vanaman looked puzzled. "You met him?"

"No. I only gathered it from his manner."

The stenographer closed her desk. "Anything more, Mr. Vanaman?"

"No, thank you, Miss Girodet," the employer answered. He went to the door and held it open for her as she went out. "A nice girl, that," he added as he closed the door upon her exit.

Edith was regarding him with stern eyes. Her lips were set, and she tapped the floor with the toe of her right boot.

"So your business friend that was here seemed to think," said she.

"What—Tyrrell?" Charley chuckled. "Well, any bait that catches the fish is good bait." He noticed the cloud on his wife's face. "She's a good worker, too," he said.

"She appeared to be working Mr. Tyrrell," replied Edith, "and she is quite ready to work you, too."

Charley blushed. It was a blush of honest denial of all guilt, a blush, moreover, of fear of his accuser's anger; but it was also the blush of a man that is flattered. Edith recognized only its last significance.

"Nonsense," said Charley.

"Who is she?" demanded Edith.

"You here? Miss Girodet, my stenographer."

"French, I suppose?"

"Her parents were. Good heavens, Edith, you've heard me speak of her often enough."

"Yes, very often indeed, now that I come to think of it. Too often." Edith's breast rose and fell heavily. "But you never happened to mention that you thought her a beauty."

Charley saw the approaching trouble and tried to avoid it by a lie. "I don't think she's a beauty."

"You do!" Edith's voice lifted to a grating sharpness, and her lips parted in a sneering smile that showed her teeth. "Why can't you tell the truth for once?"

"My dear," said Charley, trying to put a heavy, quieting hand on the shoulder that was quickly drawn away, "when have I ever lied to you?"

"Lied!" Edith's anger burst. "Haven't I known you to lie under oath? Her cheeks are painted, and so are her lips. Anybody who wasn't a fool could see that. I know you. I see you now. I might have known it from the way we started—the way you started with *me*." She considered her own case. She was not pretty when she was angry, and, now that she broke into sobs of self-pity, she was almost ugly; but her utter disregard of the consequences of the noise she made, her carelessness to what her husband's business neighbors passing in the hall outside might think, thoroughly frightened Charley. "I'm at home washing dishes and mending clothes all day, and you're down here flirting with a painted French girl!"

He scarcely knew what he said, but what he said was:

"Dearie, dearie, please don't talk so loud. She's not painted."

"How did you find that out?"

"Oh, I didn't mean— Edith, please. Somebody will be sure to hear you."

"I don't care who hears me!" Torn by the long strain of the past months, and the recent news of what looked like promise of her former husband's success, she completely abandoned herself. Her voice became a shriek. "A painted French girl!" she cried.

"Edith!"

"I won't stop. You needn't try to

stop me. And don't think she cares anything about you. She'd make eyes at any man. She does make them at every man. You're her boss, that's all. But you're such a soft thing that any girl can fool you if she's made up enough and smiles at you. You're just like Jim!"

At the mention of that name, a purple anger surged into Charley's face. He leaped forward and put his hand over her twisted, shouting mouth.

"Shut up," he commanded—"or I'll do something that Jim never had the nerve to do."

She struggled in his arms. She fought him, but she fought in vain. Then, quite suddenly, she lay still. She had fainted.

He was terribly scared. He wondered if she were dead, and, if so, what, at the inquest, witnesses could say of the noise of that quarrel. He loosened her dress and fanned her face and kissed her, begging her to open her eyes, and, as he kissed her, all his love for her returned.

"Come back!" he whispered in her ear. "Come back to me, dearie! Edith, can't you hear? Won't you hear me? What you thought wasn't true, but if you'll only believe me, I'll do anything—anything you ask. I love you, Edith! I love you! I love you!"

Slowly she opened the brown stars that were her eyes.

"Will you—will you send away that horrid girl?" she asked.

Her husband nodded.

"And get a man stenographer—a man?"

"Yes," said Charley.

She clutched his hand.

VIII

It was patched up, and for some time the patch wore as well as most patches. Charley felt that he had been sorely injured by unjust suspicion and grievously insulted by his wife's likening him to Jim, but, though he did not forget these things, in the fullness of his restored love he forgave them. Edith, too, though she did not acknowledge that she had

been wrong—she was not in the habit of uttering such awkward admissions—made an honest endeavor to put Miss Girodet out of her mind, and, in the revival of her passion for Charley, blamed her experience with Jim for creating in her the frame of mind that led her to distrust all men. Thus it appeared that nobody suffered except the absent Jim—and, save that Jim was more than ever present in the background of their consciousness, the lives of Charley and his wife went on much as they had gone before. Only the strain of the waiting grew increasingly trying, the hatred of the unmentioned Jim developed and the relief in whiskey, which however never resulted in patent intoxication, became more frequent.

The first change came with Charley when, one noon, he arrived home unexpectedly for lunch. His cheeks were tinged with excitement, and he seemed like a boy again. He kissed Edith boisterously.

"It's over!" he cried. "If we only manage this new deal right, the hard times are ended."

Edith was all questions.

"You remember that fellow Bob Tyrrell you saw that time—well, that time you were at the office," Charley explained. "He's our meat."

Edith remembered him.

"What'd you think of him?"

"I didn't think much about him. He was too busy with the stenographer, and, besides, he looked a little like—like Jim."

Charley's brow clouded.

"Oh, don't talk about Jim now," he said, but he brightened immediately. "We've got a success that'll make Jim green with envy. And, anyway, Tyrrell's not really like him—same hair and height and manners, maybe—that's all. A little stuck up, like Jim, but that's just how I could work him: I'd learned the sort. This man's eyes are blue, and his nose is like one of those statues of an old Roman politician."

"But who is he, and what's he going to do for us?"

It seemed that Tyrrell was going to do the same thing that they wanted of

anybody: he was going to put into the invention the money needed to float it. Personally, Charley knew nothing of this patron beyond that he had a card to Vanaman's club, had met Charley at one of the inventor's now rare visits there and, being told of the sounder, as every chance acquaintance was, became more and more interested until he was now tacitly promising his support.

"Are you sure he really has the money?" asked Edith.

"Trust me for that. I had him looked up financially. He's a rich young Boston fellow. He inherited no end of cash, and he's thinking of settling here in New York. That was enough for me. I've talked him 'round, and all you've got to do is to be nice to him. We're going to have him to dinner tonight."

Edith's face showed sudden dismay.

"We can't have him here," she wailed.

"Certainly not. Oh, just trust me to do the right thing, my dear. We're to dine at Martin's." Charley chuckled. "Where's the liquor?" he asked. "I'm so worked up over this good luck that I can hardly think."

"Martin's!" his wife repeated. "You know we can't afford that."

"Can't we, though?" Vanaman displayed two bills, one for a hundred dollars and the other for fifty. "I guess one of those will pay the order."

"Charley!" She put out her hands for the money. "How did you get that?"

"By being a good little boy. I ran up to see father as soon as I'd hooked Tyrrell. Father's not so well; Mame's rather worried about him—needlessly, I think, for he's been this way so often—but I told her where she could get me by 'phone any time today or tonight, and of course tomorrow first thing I'll run up there."

"But the money?"

"Oh, yes. Well, I told father I'd interested an expert—Tyrrell is an expert in a way: an expert investor, anyhow, and perfectly clear-headed—and father agreed to cough up this much toward cinching him. Then, if I do cinch him, father'll come along in on the deal. We

sha'n't really need his money, then, but I guess we can use all we get."

Edith was suspicious. "You got all this by only saying that?"

"Not exactly." He put his arm around her waist. "He asked about you, and I had to—had to say we hadn't been seeing much of each other lately. Honestly, he can't stand any shock, you know, and you told me long ago to jolly him a bit."

Edith's mind reverted to the present.

"I haven't any fit clothes," she said.

"Take this fifty and buy some."

"Get a dinner gown in an afternoon? And for only fifty dollars? Charley, you must be crazy!"

It was a dash of cold water on his warm triumph. He rather snapped at her. He even intimated that, as Jim's wife, she had never owned a gown that cost more, and Edith gave way to tears. In the end, however, she partially surrendered: she took the fifty dollars and reconciled herself to her old gown.

Tyrrell, as it proved, was physically not in the least like Jim. The few points of likeness were negligible, and only an ease of manner and a readiness of phrase were sufficiently dissimilar to Vanaman and sufficiently similar to his predecessor as to insist at all upon the comparison. The Bostonian was younger than either Jim or Charley, but his face was the self-possessed face of a man of means who is also a man of the world. It was a stern, strong, dignified face with eagle eyes and a firm mouth. Even Edith had to admit that it was handsome. She wondered what such a man could have found attractive in the stenographer that her husband had summarily dismissed, and she soon found herself far more at ease than was Charley in the sort of talk that Tyrrell reserved for women.

They dined well, and there was plenty of champagne. Edith drank sparingly, because she saw that Tyrrell did not show the effects of what he drank and because Charley was plainly drinking somewhat at random. By conversational diversions that she was sure Tyrrell observed, but that he pretended not to observe, she kept Vanaman from

too heavy insistence upon the sounder, and not until the coffee and brandy were served did she permit her husband to raise his glass to it.

"Well," said Charley, "here's to the invention!"

Tyrrell bowed approval.

"To your good fortune!" said he.

It was a waiter that interfered. He said that Charley was wanted at the telephone, and when Charley returned it was with news that postponed the toast indefinitely.

"It's from Mame," he said. "My sister, I mean," he explained to Tyrrell. "There's been another sinking spell. Morley's been sent for, and he says the end may be delayed, but that I'd better come at once."

Edith's fear of death sent her pale. "I'm so sorry," she whispered. Then she realized that all this was unintelligible to their guest. "My husband's father has been ill for a long while," she said. "My sister-in-law has telephoned that he has suddenly been taken worse."

Tyrrell rose at once, regret on his lips and in his eyes.

"You must go at once," he said.

Charley nodded solemnly and, the bill paid, they hurried to the line of waiting motors before the door. Vanaman started to give an address to the chauffeur.

"But I'm not going with you, am I?" asked Edith. She did not want to seem heartless, but she dreaded a house into which death was soon to enter, and she knew that at the Vanamans' she would be both useless and unacknowledged.

Her husband understood.

"That's true," he said. "My wife," he explained to Tyrrell, "won't go with me. There are circumstances—"

He hesitated painfully, and Edith found time to blush for his awkwardness, but Tyrrell saved the situation.

"If I may see Mrs. Vanaman to your home," he suggested, "I shall be glad. I want to be of any help possible."

Charley's protruding eyes seemed to glow with a jealous refusal, and Edith, who had never yet known him to be jealous, speedily resumed the high hand.

"That is kind of you," she said.

"Thank you; I am a little nervous. Get in. Charley, I'll wait up for you, of course, and you can telephone."

As the taxi whirled her and Tyrrell up the street, she was the prey of varied emotions. She was worn out by her long, silent hatred of the husband she had divorced and by his constant presence in her mind; she was nervously ill from the poverty of her present life, the strain of Charley's business difficulties and the fallacy of her position toward Charley's father; the stimulants that had become her habitual aid were slowly growing to be her daily enemies; envy gnawed at her soul and hope deferred made her heart sick. These forces left her in no mood fit to meet adequately the last moment of crisis when, with the horror of death upon them, Charley must clumsily hint to Tyrrell of the elder Vanaman's dislike for her, must risk Tyrrell's business support by boorishness and must display a jealous suspicion for which there was no foundation in fact. Quite suddenly she burst into uncontrollable tears.

Tyrrell was genuinely distressed. He tried at first to respect her feelings by ignoring them, but Edith's sobs were never of a sort to brook ignoring.

"My dear Mrs. Vanaman," said Tyrrell, "I am very, very sorry that this bad news has so upset you."

Because she was lonely and afraid, she put her hand on his. The action was as simple and spontaneous as that of a child appealing to its nearest protector.

"Oh," she said, "it isn't only that. It's everything—everything! We're dreadfully poor, and his people don't like me, and I'm lonely; and now, with this—this thing about his father—I'm afraid—I'm just dreadfully afraid!"

Before they had reached the apartment house, she had told him much of her story. Her divorce she had not mentioned, but there remained in her narrative, formed entirely from her own point of view, enough to interest and move him. He was a man of the world and therefore a sentimentalist. He felt for her; he pitied her. In all friendliness he offered to stay a while in her rooms with her, and there he tried to

quiet her by diverting their talk to other things.

There were whiskey and water on one of the parlor tables, and he poured her some and took a drink himself. By the time that he thought it safe to leave her, she was recovering something of her accustomed appearance of serenity, and looked again the beautiful woman that she still generally was. To her he seemed a wise, courteous and kindly man, a strong and handsome comforter sent from the social sphere to which she hoped one day to attain.

"Good night," he smiled, and put out his hand. "I hope you will be all right now."

"Good night," she answered. "You have been very good to me."

The hands were held for that mere moment longer than is common which makes it so hard to release them and so impossible to retain them. Her brown eyes were bright with fresh tears, tears of gratitude now and tears unshed. Tyrrell's face was gravely tender.

"I've done nothing, Mrs. Vanaman," he was saying; "but—may I come again?"

"I'd love to see you, Mr. Tyrrell—any time."

He left her, and a quarter of an hour later it was her heavy husband with a puffed and brutalized face who was standing in his place. Charley had no sooner entered than he saw the two empty whiskey glasses, and wrung from her the admission that Tyrrell had been in the room.

"So that's what you do as soon as I'm called away to my sick father!" he blustered.

She was innocent, and she was angry at his injustice. Her cheeks flamed and her delicate hands were clenched at her sides.

"You forget that you told me to be nice to him."

"Nice! That's one thing; but this—" Charley indicated the empty glasses.

"How dare you suspect me?" she demanded.

Charley chuckled bitterly. "How did you dare to suspect me?" he asked.

They faced each other, their eyes like

drawn poniards. Each one knew the answer to those questions. In each case, each was thinking, the answer was: "Because, in similar circumstances, you were guilty with me."

Quickly Charley's gaze fell. He poured himself some liquor and drank it eagerly. He was almost glad to be the bearer of bad news.

"Well," he said, "while you were doing this, father died. I 'phoned Zoller, the lawyer, to get him out of bed and ask him about the will. The will leaves everything to Mame if I'm ever married to you."

IX

OLD Mr. Vanaman was safely dead, and in at least one respect Edith could triumph over his helpless carcass: she could live in the house from which he had barred her. Indeed, in spite of her own once expressed determination against living with any relative of her husband, there was nothing else to be done. Tyrrell, though they saw much of him, unaccountably held off from producing the money needed for the invention, and Edith, upbraiding her husband for misrepresenting his friend's belief in the sounder, and dismayed to find Charley heavily in debt, was even forced to accept the shelter of the Vanaman roof. She had reminded Charley that Jim, with all his faults, had taken better financial care of her, but she at last, however, ungraciously bowed to the inevitable.

The very seriousness of their position temporarily sobered both husband and wife. Charley turned to Mame and found her acquiescent. She would welcome the housework, being, she said, only too glad to do what she could to help her brother. She even made him her trustee, and gave him, at Edith's suggestion, a power-of-attorney with the bank; and if the wife found herself tremendously bored by the entire old-fashioned air of the establishment, Charley, still sanguine for his invention, continuously reminded her that they were at any rate secure from starvation, and that Tyrrell, whom hard necessity

compelled him to forgive, had but to be properly encouraged to place their feet upon the road to fortune.

It was one evening a month or more after the funeral that Charley, his sister having left home to attend a meeting of her church women's missionary society, announced that he had an important appointment with Tyrrell, and went out, leaving Edith alone. And it was not ten minutes after his departure that Tyrrell called at the house where, because of its antiquated air, Edith was always ashamed to receive him.

"But," she said, "Charley's just gone out to meet you."

"To meet me?" Tyrrell's handsome face was puzzled. "I thought we were to meet here. Where's he gone?"

"I don't know. He didn't say."

"That's odd. I surely understood that he was to be here." He smiled at her. "If I've been stupid, and if you don't know where he's gone, I don't see that there's anything for you to do, Mrs. Vanaman, but to try to put up with me until he comes back."

He was right, and she was not loath to see that he was; yet, from something in his manner, she was flattered by the guess that his misunderstanding might have been willful. At any rate, he was obviously contented to sit on a sofa beside her in the old-fashioned parlor and, more handsome than ever in his evening clothes, to talk with her in a tone that rapidly became more serious than any they had previously adopted in their latterly not infrequent tête-à-têtes.

Somehow, with her warm brown eyes on his firm face, she fell again to telling him, if not all that there was to tell about herself, at least more than she was in the habit of telling other people. Had he been right, on the night of the elder Vanaman's death, in saying that all would turn out well? No, he had not been right. She pointed out to him, as delicately as she could, the ambiguous position in which the will left her and her husband, and she did not hesitate to hint that she could not bring herself to be really friendly with Charley's sister.

"But, after all, you have Charley," he submitted.

She shrugged her graceful shoulders.

"For the evenings—and even for some of those his business keeps him away."

"Ah, yes, of course." Was there a hint of insincerity in that ready agreement? "And so you're a little lonely?"

"Sometimes; and I don't like it."

"No doubt; only, don't we all have to be more or less lonely? Isn't that the law of life?"

"For you?" she asked.

"Sometimes I think most of all for me."

"I shouldn't have supposed so," said Edith. She was looking at the floor, which was disfigured by a hideous Brussels carpet, but she shot a brown glance at him.

"You mean," he quickly took her up, "that I console myself?"

Edith resumed her inspection of the carpet.

"I mean," said she, "that I remember the first time I saw you—and that you were then consoling yourself so well that you didn't see me at all."

He vowed that she must be mistaken; but Edith recalled to him the occasion when she had seen him engrossed by her husband's stenographer. Tyrrell frankly blushed.

"You're right," he said. "I didn't observe you then. I'm sorry."

"Oh, there was nothing to be sorry for—was there?"

"There was this: that I didn't observe you."

"She was a very pretty girl, Mr. Tyrrell."

He caught her gaze and held it.

"Do you think that such things count?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Edith, her own cheek reddening, "exactly what you mean. Whether they count or not depends, I should say, on whether you let them count."

He seemed truly distressed.

"Really, really, Mrs. Vanaman," he said, in a voice that was low and unsteady, "you mustn't think— A stenographer! I'm not a snob, but neither am I a cad!"

"Then why?"—she met him with a

look that went deep—"why do you think that you must explain to me?"

She found that it moved her strangely to find that she had the power to move this man who was of a grain so much finer than Charley. Just now it was plain that she could move him at her will. She would have assured herself, had she paused to consider assurance needed, that she was loyal to her husband, was indeed serving his interests, but she permitted Tyrrell to take her hand as, his eyes on hers, he slowly answered:

"Because I, too, am lonely here in New York, and don't want to lose the friendship of the only really fine woman that has been my friend. Because—"

"Hello!" said Charley.

They both started to see Vanaman standing in the doorway. Tyrrell dropped Edith's hand; he was wholly self-possessed, but Edith, seeing clearly that Charley was making a doubtful effort at self-control, felt a quick anger against her husband's intrusion.

"You've come just at the end of my experiment in fortune telling," said Tyrrell, rising. "I find that your wife is to be a rich woman. Where have you been? I thought you told me to meet you here."

Charley's eyes were hot.

"I said the lobby of the Waldorf," he corrected.

"Did you? That's too bad, but I never could hear well over a 'phone."

Vanaman grunted an indistinguishable reply.

"Edith," he added, "you'd better leave us alone for a little while. We've got to talk business."

X

SHE left them and went upstairs, trembling a little from fear of what her husband might do or say to ruin his financial chances with Tyrrell, trembling more from fear of how he might compromise her with the guest, and most of all angry at his suspicions and his unexpected return. Leaning over the stair railing from the upper floor, she

tried to hear the two men's talk; her ears could detect nothing save a low murmur of voices, but she held her position until the tiresome Mame came back from her missionary meeting and, driving Edith before her into the second story sitting room, compelled her to listen to the gossip of the church. The wife was almost glad when, Tyrrell having at last unmistakably departed, Charley reappeared, his brows contracted, his mouth squared, jealous vengeance almost absurdly breathing in his throat.

"Mame," said Charley, "go to bed. I want to say something to Edith."

Mame's jaw dropped, but she left the room without a word.

Husband and wife tacitly waited until they heard the sister's footsteps die away in the higher regions of the house. Then Edith, who well knew that to say the first word and capture the role of the wronged party is to win the opening skirmish of every domestic battle, hurried to speak.

"You disgrace me!" she declared.

She was momentarily successful.

"Disgrace you?" He could not follow her. "I disgrace you?"

"Oh, you know very well what I mean—thinking these things of me and letting Mr. Tyrrell see that you think them."

"Did I say a single word?"

"You didn't have to. You looked as solemn as a funeral and as angry as a mad bull. I saw it and he saw it. You needn't think he'll put money in your invention if you keep this up. The idea of you suspecting me like that!"

But there she gave him an opening. He turned hotly on her. "It was perfectly evident that you were trying to flirt with him. Why shouldn't I suspect you?" His breath came short. "I know what you're thinking," he burst out. "You're making more of your comparisons. I see you making them in your own mind and hiding them there every day—comparing me with Jim!"

Edith, though not beautiful in her rages, was never ineffective. Charley had probed her secret. It was a secret of which she herself was scarcely con-

scious; it was a sore secret because, however often she might think of some good point in Jim, she hated Jim the more that she thought of any virtue in him; but her present husband had hit upon a half-truth, had drawn it from that inner self which dislikes to have its concepts brought to light. She glared at Charley as a tigress glares before it springs. Her bosom rose and fell; her brown eyes launched green rays.

"You invite comparison!" she cried. "You invite it. Jim would never have suspected me like this."

Charley, however, did not quail; his jealousy was too hot. He bent toward her.

"The more fool Jim, as you well know," he said.

The words struck her like a blow in the face, and her face went first white and then crimson. Whether from the force of the attack, or because she could think of no more potent way of repelling it, Edith started back and collapsed, sobbing, on a sofa.

Yet, if she had a mind to faint, Charley would not regard it. He had, and he meant to keep, the upper hand. He merely strode closer and stood threateningly above her.

"You forget," he said, "that you've suspected me, and for the same reason. You made me fire Miss Girodet—my stenographer; now you've got—just a moment, please; don't interrupt—now you've got to drop Bob Tyrrell."

He had won. She tried every weapon that she had left; she tried hysterics, but her physical contortions only made her ugly in his eyes, and he was firm.

"I never want to see him again!" she vowed at last. "And I never will."

Perhaps she expected her husband to relent at this, but if she did, she was disappointed.

"All right," said Charley.

"And then," panted Edith, "if we drop him, where'll you get the money that you've got to have?"

Charley turned away.

"Never you mind about that," he chuckled. "I'll get the money all right."

He would pay no further attention to her. He left her when she turned to

their bedroom, and, though she sobbed so hard that she was sure that he must hear her, he strolled calmly down into the dining room to compose himself with a bottle.

As a matter of fact, he was not dissatisfied with his night's work. He reflected on his recent conversation with Tyrrell, and reflecting on this, he smiled to himself over his ability to manage women. For he now assured himself that Edith really loved him and had simply been properly checked at the start of a little flirtation. He had succeeded in keeping her from asking what he had said to their guest; he had left her in a healthy uncertainty and fear, and yet his talk with Tyrrell had been wholly friendly and had resulted in no more than the fixing of a final business appointment for the following day. Charley had made up his mind that Edith should be protected from temptation, and that Tyrrell should never again enter the Vanaman house, but the inventor intended that all this should be arranged diplomatically and that the arrangement should dawn upon the Bostonian, if ever, only after Tyrrell had put his money into the sounder.

For the sounder had now reached the crucial stage of its course. The next fortnight would, its inventor did not conceal from himself, prove either its success or its inventor's ruin. The large telegraph companies had proved hopelessly obdurate; they could be forced, but not cajoled, and to force them there must be organized a company to bring the sounder to the notice of the public at large. For that, money, of which there was none save Tyrrell's in sight, must be secured, and secured immediately. Meanwhile, a deal of advertising had been done. There were bills from the newspapers and heavier bills from the job printers, all long overdue and all clamoring for payment. A little new money and he was sure that he would triumph; a single suit for debt and his entire scheme would come crashing about his head.

That night, after he had drunk a little more liquor than was good for him, the successful manager of women and in-

vestors went to bed serenely certain; but the next morning there happened something on which he had not counted. Edith, whom he had elaborately terrified to such a point that she dared not ask what he had said to Tyrrell, herself rang up the Bostonian on the telephone and, regardless of the fact that Mame crossed the hall beside the telephone while the conversation was in progress, attempted to apologize to Tyrrell for her husband's rudeness.

"He's all worked up over his invention," she explained, "and he's really not himself. If he only were himself, of course he wouldn't be so foolish to think what—that you couldn't help seeing he thought."

"Oh!" Tyrrell's voice sounded drily in her ears. "So that's it, is it? How absurd of him!"

"Yes," said Edith, "isn't it?"

"Well," Tyrrell replied, "I suppose you want me to make myself scarce, don't you, Mrs. Vanaman?"

"Oh, not that. I only—only wanted you to understand."

"I understand perfectly," said Tyrrell.

Edith felt that he did not understand perfectly, yet she hardly knew how to proceed or whether she should proceed at all. If he had only been face to face with her, the task would have been easy—his mobile, sympathetic face invited her confidences; but the telephone receiver was not sympathetic, and after her difficult night she yearned for sympathy.

"Is that all?" came Tyrrell's voice.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, almost in tears. "But I'm—I'm so unhappy about it. Our friendship—"

"Don't worry," repeated Tyrrell; "I'm sorry, but I understand."

That is how it happened that, at his office, Charley, at the moment when Tyrrell should have called there to complete their deal, received, instead of a call, a messenger-borne letter in which the prospective investor curtly regretted that certain reverses on the market made it impossible for him to put up the money that the Vanaman Sounder required for a new lease of life. It was only a few minutes later that,

one after the other, the lawyers of three of the sounder's creditors called Charley on the telephone and threatened to enter suit immediately unless payments were made.

The inventor hung up the receiver in despair. There was no way of escape. At once, after his father's death, he had pleaded with Mame, but Mame on this point was obdurate: his dead parent had once instructed her to invest not one cent in the sounder until a telegraph company had endorsed it. She was foolish to follow such instructions—Charley was certain about that—but she was the sort of weak woman that is strong in reliance on the word of a trusted adviser—and now Tyrrell had proved to be a broken reed.

Then it was that Charley remembered the power-of-attorney that his sister had given to him.

XI

WHEN Charley came home that evening, he was a frightened and bewildered man. He was frightened because of what he had done; he was bewildered because he could not fathom the causes that had made his course imperative. There should be no difficulty about keeping Mame in the dark until the thoroughly launched sounder had earned enough money to replace what the brother had misappropriated, but the fact that the misappropriation had been made was hard to bear. There should be no trouble, after a little further tampering with Mame's fortune, in getting along without Tyrrell's aid, but the fact that Tyrrell had withdrawn was sinister. In the circumstances, the last person that Vanaman wanted to talk about was Tyrrell, and yet about Tyrrell, as it chanced, he had almost immediately to talk; the last person that he wanted to see was Mame, and yet Mame was the first person that he asked for.

"Where's Mame?" he inquired of Edith, who stood as if waiting for him in the upstairs sitting room.

Edith's face expressed a strange mixture of triumph, defiance and timidity.

"She's gone," said she.

"Gone?" gasped Charley. It seemed as if his sister might have achieved the impossible: might have learned of what he had done. "What do you mean—'gone'?"

"She's left," said Edith slowly. "And because she went, the maid and the cook went, too. They never did like me any better than Mame did." Her voice sharpened. "And I won't do the housework," she added. "I may as well tell you that right now. I never had to do any housework until you—until— Jim never made me do any, and I won't do it now."

Charley heard only the first words and the mention of the man that somehow still remained his rival.

"Jim!" he nearly shouted. "What do I care about Jim? Where's Mame? That's what I want to know."

"And it's what I'm telling you. She's gone."

"Do you mean to say to me that you've at last succeeded in driving my sister out of her own house?"

Edith was now resolutely calm.

"If you had your rights," she said, "it would be no more her house than yours and mine."

"She's gone for good?"

"So she told me."

Charley felt his heart freeze in his breast. All the rage went out of him; there was no time for rage; this was a time only to save himself from a situation that might end in his apprehension as a thief.

"Good God!" he gasped. "We mustn't let her go! Where'd she go, Edith? I've got to go right after her and bring her back."

"She said she was going to stop for a time at a Mrs. Hamilton's. I dare say you know the address, for I think Mrs. Hamilton is an officer in one of Mame's church societies. But I want you to understand one thing, Charley: you can't bring her back here if I am to stay. I won't live with her any more."

"You won't? You've got to!" Vanaman's mystification overcame him. "In heaven's name, what's happened?" he asked.

Edith had known all along that she

would have to tell. It was something to be able to tell it before her sister-in-law had the chance.

"I was worried," she said, "about what happened between you and Mr. Tyrrell last night. I was afraid you might antagonize him, so that he wouldn't put his money into the sounder. He wouldn't put it in if nobody smoothed away that embarrassment of last night. You'd made me promise not to see him, so I 'phoned. I simply said that you were worried by business difficulties—by not being able to get the money that would make the sounder make a fortune—"

Charley swore softly, but Edith was proceeding:

"Mame heard me. I believe she listened. I was always sure she was spiteful and jealous of my place in this house. Anyhow, she heard just enough to know I was talking to Mr. Tyrrell, and it seems that, last night, she'd been listening, too, and had heard you tell me not to see him. She said awful things—horrid. She said she wouldn't stay where people did what I'd done—'goings on,' she called it—and so I simply told her that I was your wife and that, whether she liked it or not, I would stay here as long as you did. Then she packed a few of her clothes and left."

Charley sank upon the lounge on which his wife had sunk the night before. He put his face in his hands.

"Good God!" he groaned again.

"What's the matter?" asked Edith. "If you think more of your sister—"

Charley's voice, which came through his fingers, interrupted her.

"Now I know what was wrong with Tyrrell today."

"Wrong with him? Was there something wrong?" All of Edith's strength rose to her self-justification. "Then it wasn't what I said to him today; it was because I was too obedient to you to say more. Whatever was wrong was wrong because you behaved the way you did last night. None of it would have happened if you hadn't suspected me the way that Ji—the way nobody ever suspected me before. What *was* wrong?"

Charley raised a face that was haggard with fear.

"He's pulled out; he's refused to put up a single cent—"

"Then it was your fault!"

"Wait a moment. The lawyers began 'phoning. There was the Stenfield account for two thousand, and the—oh, I forget the names and the figures! They'd have entered suit tomorrow, and that would have ended the sounder forever. We'd have been down and out, you and I. Well, there was that power-of-attorney of Mame's. I used it."

Edith's own face whitened. She drew away a pace.

"Will—they will find it out?" she whispered.

"I don't know. Here's Mame turned enemy—"

"That wasn't my fault. You oughtn't ever to have brought me here."

"What else could I do? Anyhow, it doesn't matter whose fault it was in the beginning. The point is that I've used her money—"

"Well, if she didn't mean you to use it, why did she give you the power-of-attorney?"

Charley shook his head wearily. "I don't know. I asked her."

"I believe," began Edith, "that even then you thought—"

"I don't know. Perhaps I did. But now—" He stopped. Back in his brain, in the depths of his memory, cluttered over by the business worries, the jealousies and the debauches of the past weeks, something rang like a bell, sharp and clear. He rose. He looked up, his eyes staring into hers. "Wasn't it you that suggested my getting that power-of-attorney from her?" he demanded. "It was you! *Why did you suggest it?*"

For a long moment their glances met, and they probed each other's souls. There was no word said, but there passed between them one of those incandescent flashes of understanding which are so rare even between the happily married. In that flash, as an honest man and wife scarcely ever comprehend each other, Edith compre-

hended Vanaman and Vanaman comprehended her.

Slowly she advanced to him; slowly she put her arms around his neck, slowly raised her lips to his.

"What if you did take some of her money?" whispered Vanaman's wife. "Your father wasn't himself when he made that last will; he was half out of his mind. You can pay her back, with interest. The invention's sure to make money for her—we both know that. If you hadn't the right to use a little of it that way, what will she care when she finds it's been a good investment for her? What does it matter so long as she doesn't know? She needn't ever know. She doesn't suspect. She's not angry with you. Go and see her tomorrow—give me tonight, but go and see her tomorrow morning, early. Don't bring her back, but smooth her down. You can do anything you want with her. You know how easy she is." Her arms tightened; she held him close; as she spoke, her red lips brushed his lips. "The money was half yours by right, Charley—more than half. What made your father make a new will? *Who* made him make it?"

He did not answer, but it was, for this hour, as it had been with them both on that morning before the news of the granting of the divorce came to them; as their league against Jim had then brought them together, so their league against Mame brought them together now: fear fell from them, and within them rose, beating in their temples and straining at their throats, the passion that was, after all, the purest emotion that they had in common. They were one again: guilt had once more done for them what marriage could not do.

XII

DOUBT came at the time when it usually arrives: in the morning. Both Edith and Charley woke with headaches, for they had drunk a good deal during the night, and both showed it.

Edith, through half-opened eyes, saw that her husband, as he stood before the

shaving mirror, looked worn and vulgar. His skin was dull; his prominent eyes were bloodshot—as, indeed, they now usually were; and his hair, daily growing thinner, showed touches of gray. The rough stubble on his loose cheeks did not improve his appearance, and, as he now sought to remove it, he more than once cut himself with his trembling razor.

Nor was Charley's vision of his wife more edifying. To the end, Edith was always able to simulate her earlier beauty when she had time to prepare the simulation; but, under the cruel light of the morning, she showed plainly her seniority. It flashed through Vanaman's mind that the best of her was what had been Jim's, and he hated Jim the more because of this.

"Suppose she doesn't let me jolly her," said Charley—"Mame, I mean."

"She will," yawned Edith. She did not want to think of unpleasant things; she wanted to go to sleep again.

"But suppose she doesn't," Charley persisted.

"Then it will be your fault," said his wife. She yawned again.

"Aren't you going to get up?" asked Vanaman.

"No," said Edith.

"But what am I going to do about breakfast?"

"What am I going to do, Charley? I suppose you can get a cup of coffee on your way over to Mame's. But don't tell her you didn't have one here; that'd only please her."

Charley cut himself again and cried out. Nevertheless, he did not then upbraid his wife for slothfulness; she was an important ally, and allies were few.

Presently Edith, who had shut her eyes again, resumed:

"If she doesn't let herself be smoothed down, that's no reason why she should suspect you; but if she does suspect you, perhaps we can still bring Mr. Tyrrell around."

It was what had been in Charley's mind. He did not like to hear his wife suggest it, but he had been about to suggest it himself.

"Yes," he said, "perhaps we'd better try. If things don't go right with Mame,

we'll talk it over when I come home this evening."

Things did not go tremendously right with Mame. She wept a good deal when Charley found her at Mrs. Hamilton's, but her tears were not soft. Edith, according to Mame, had been quite as ready of criticism as Mame had been in Edith's version of their quarrel, and Mame, though as a Christian she forgave, could not as a self-respecting woman forget. In the latter character, she told her brother that he owed it as a duty to his sister to insist upon an apology from his wife; in the former, she declared that, in her opinion, her brother's wife was a spouse that he had better separate from at once if he did not want soon to have to divorce her.

Charley knew but could not say that the apology was as impossible as was Mame's return home, which the apology would entail. Moreover, though he had been ready enough to suspect his wife and to accuse her in the privacy of their own life, he did not care to hear her accused by anybody else, and he did not forget that the present accuser, if his sister, was also the actual inheritor of money that he believed by right to be his.

He accordingly lost his temper, and there were more tears and a scene, in the course of which Mame declared that, since her only living relative hated her, she would cut the last strand that bound them and turn the management of her estate over to her father's lawyer, Mr. Zoller. It took a good deal of tact, of which Charley in his best moments had no large supply, to turn the conversation away from such unsisterly threats, and he left Mame only partially pacified.

He went to his hopeless office hopelessly and passed there a worried day. He was in for it now, he reflected, and, on the old theory that it is as well to hang—if detected—for a sheep as for a lamb, he boldly drew another and larger cheque against Mame's capital and prepared to put forth his invention on what, for the moment, forgetting his sister's involuntary contribution of the line, he described as his own hook. He had no right to use Mame's money for such a purpose; the terms of the power-

of-attorney, dictated by the hard-hearted Mr. Zoller, explicitly forbade it; but he was perfectly certain that the sounder was—Charley mixed his metaphors shamelessly—a gold mine, and besides, there was always a chance that Tyrrell might still be brought around.

Almost at that instant, as it happened, Edith was doing some fishing on her own hook, too. She was, in fact, not waiting for her husband's report of his interview with his sister, but was engaged in an endeavor to bring Tyrrell quite as far round as, if not farther than, Charley wanted him to be.

Perhaps Edith's motives were mixed. Perhaps there was still strong upon her the reaction that had come with the morning. Perhaps the suave and young Tyrrell—a little reminiscent of Jim as she had known Jim in their happier days, and not at all the Jim that her memory had distorted into a thing to hate—offered a pleasant contrast to Charley, and even suggested to a mind that had lied its owner's way to one divorce the possibility of an anchor to windward in the event of any storm.

Be that as it may, when Tyrrell had telephoned to the house, ostensibly to ask some further questions brought up by reflection on their last conversation, Edith was pleased to hear his voice. When he said that they could talk more satisfactorily if they lunched downtown together, Edith, who had not breakfasted, was ready to accept. And when they thus met in a first-rate restaurant where Charley was certain not to be, she was frankly glad to see him.

"I don't know what you must think of us," she said, when she finally judged it the moment to speak of such things.

"Why 'us'?" he asked, his glance full upon hers.

Her eyes lighted with the old feeling of conquest to be gained, but she had the grace to let them drop.

"Why not?" was all she had to say.

They had finished their luncheon and, over glasses of green mint, were delaying their departure. About them the chatter at the other tables, the noise of dishes and the brass of an orchestra in a balcony almost over their heads made them

feel as unnoticed as two children at a circus; if one can hide by night in a large city, he can hide by noon in a great restaurant, and Tyrrell and Edith, though they did not consider the necessity of being hidden save from the possibly jealous gaze of Vanaman, were at least temporarily secure from the interruptions of their own world.

As they had sat at their ease after a luncheon chosen with the care and delicacy that Edith thought such a luncheon deserved, both man and woman put aside their smiles and lighter talk and drifted, as they invariably drifted when alone, to something personal if not intimate.

"I wonder," said Tyrrell slowly, "if you know what a beautiful woman you are?"

There was perfect sincerity in his voice, and Edith, after elaborate preparations, was, indeed, looking her best; but she knew the ground to be dangerous; besides, they had somehow not yet talked of what they had ostensibly met to talk about.

"Don't," she said, and without coquetry. "I'm glad you think so; but—is that all?"

She was searching her soul. Somehow she wondered how much beauty counted, after all, how much it brought her, how much it might yet bring her. She thought of Charley—with no feeling of disloyalty; indeed, with little feeling at all, she had to admit—of Mame, of her dreary life in the old-fashioned Vanaman home where her position had been so obviously tolerated because of Charley's relation to her. She hated it—the hopelessness of it—and in her desire to shake off the unpleasant shackles that clung to her, she spread out her arms.

What Tyrrell saw was a pretty gesture of inquiry from a beautiful woman.

"All?" he repeated. "No. You are a very brave and fine woman, too."

"I don't know," she said honestly. "I try to be brave—but it's hard sometimes, isn't it?"

"It is hard," he answered. "I think we all try. It must be wretched for you in that dismal house."

"You do think it dismal, don't you?" How could he think it anything else, the handsome, easy-mannered man of the world whose grave eyes so earnestly studied her.

"Good heavens!" said Tyrrell. "Surely no one ever called it gay!"

They both laughed. Then Edith continued:

"I think Mame does—or used to."

"You mean the dumpy—I beg your pardon—the—"

But Edith did not object.

"That's just it," she agreed. "And her mind's somehow dumpy, too." She did not think it necessary to say that Mame was no longer an intimate of her prison.

They were silent for a moment.

"You don't belong there," he said at length.

"Where do I belong?"

"Well, you belong—here—everywhere where it is bright and happy and merry—"

Her elbows on the table and her hands bracing her face, Edith flushed with pleasure at his answer.

"Yes," she went on. "Not that I want it always; but once in a while I *do* belong where there's music and dancing—where people dress well and live well and enjoy life, you know. I've always wanted those things, and somehow I've always just missed them."

Her brown eyes glistened with unshed tears.

"Poor little woman!" said Tyrrell.

She drew herself up.

"Oh, it will come!" she said. "I know it will—if Charley ever gets his sounder through, and can give a little time to me instead of to his invention!"

A cloud crossed her companion's handsome face.

"I think," said the man, "that when one is discussing jealousy, I might be jealous of *him*."

Edith regarded her *vis-à-vis*. She reflected that he was very handsome indeed, and she told herself that somehow she liked to walk into a large room at his side. There was nothing fat about him. Just as Mame was dumpy, she wondered if Charley were not a little

fat even in his mind. Here was a man with fine ideals, with restrained habits, gentle, tender, sympathetic, a man that did not live on an invention and whiskey, a man not only of good family but of independent means. But Charley's invention, not this man, was what she must now think of, and she brought herself to it.

"I'm sorry he acted the way he did," she said. "I shouldn't have telephoned to you that morning; he was so excited, and we all know how important it is to get his invention on the market quickly. Everything upsets him now, while he's only waiting, more than it should."

"I think the sounder a good thing, Mrs. Vanaman," said Tyrrell. "I've looked the thing over pretty thoroughly. I suppose it is hard to find people to put up capital on chance—"

"It is a good investment," said Edith; "but, as you say—"

"Yes. You know if—oh, but what's the use? I can't stand a suspicious man." To himself he was thinking: "How well she carries herself! How well she wears her clothes! What a pity she hasn't better clothes! What a rotten shame that she should be tied to a man like Vanaman, and to his sordid surroundings!"

"I know," said Edith softly. "But I believe he's over it; it must have looked queer to him, you know, to come into the room and find you holding my hand, even if"—she smiled at memory of their innocent lie—"you were only telling my fortune."

Her cheeks were warm with color. Tyrrell caught her glance and held it, but the waiter, growing impatient, was demanding:

"Anything more, sir?"

"No," said Tyrrell sharply. "Bring me my bill."

Edith sighed.

"Don't you think," asked the man, "that we'd better finish our talk at another luncheon—soon?"

"Isn't it finished?"

"Do you think it is?"

"I don't know; I—"

"Well, then, we might continue it, at

any rate," said Tyrrell. "Some day next week. Say Tuesday."

"You might telephone, of course," suggested Edith.

"Yes, but—"

"Oh, it's perfectly safe at eleven in the morning. I'm always alone then. Besides, you needn't say who you are."

"Well—Tuesday."

"Perhaps. But about the invention?"

Bob Tyrrell's face was undecided.

"You know how I feel," he said.

"Yes," agreed Edith, with an upward glance, "but if it's a good thing—"

"I'll think it over," he finally said noncommittally.

XIII

As soon as Charley's latchkey sounded in the door of the Vanaman house that evening, Edith hurried into the vestibule to meet him. He had left his office somewhat earlier than usual because, after the strain of the further robbery of Mame's estate, he felt the need of a stimulant. The acquisition of this stimulant had kept him downtown until his customary hour, but it had not intoxicated him. In the present state of his nerves, a good deal of liquor was required to conquer him. He was, rather, more than commonly susceptible to impressions, and he now at once saw by his wife's face that something had gone wrong.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

Edith closed the door of the vestibule behind her, shutting them out from the hall.

"Where have you been?" she whispered.

"At my office. Where'd you suppose?"

"Well, you weren't there half an hour ago. Somebody went to see you and was told you'd gone home. Now he's here. He's just arrived. He's in the parlor."

Her voice shook. It frightened Vanaman.

"What are you talking about?" he asked. "Who's here?"

"Mr. Zoller."

"Zoller? Mame's lawyer?" Charley's eyes seemed about to start from his head. "What does he want?"

"I don't know. He's only just got here. I can't guess. Didn't you fix up Mame?"

Vanaman gulped.

"I thought I did," said he. He leaned against the wall of the vestibule, panting. "Oh, Lord!" he said.

Edith dragged at his hand.

"You can't stay here," she urged. "You've got to go in. The longer we wait, the queerer it will look to him."

Charley passed a trembling hand across his eyes.

"I can't go in," he muttered.

But Edith dragged at him.

"You must. You've got to. Come on. Do you want to ruin us? Come on into the dining room first and have a drink to brace you up."

He struggled.

"You'll go along? You'll back me up?"

"Yes, yes. Only, hurry, hurry!"

She succeeded. She led him to the dining room and then into the parlor, where Mr. Zoller was seated on the extreme edge of the stiffest of all the room's stiff chairs.

Zoller was a hard, dry little man of fifty, with a cold eye that was no respecter of persons. He rose as Charley and Edith entered.

"How d'you do, Zoller?" Charley began, with all the appearance of heartiness that he could muster. "Sorry I missed you downtown. One of the big telegraph companies called me unexpectedly into conference about my sounder. They're going to take—"

The words died away on his lips. Mr. Zoller had not seemed to see the unsteady hand that Charley extended. Vanaman was glad that the parlor was darkened and that Edith was now beside him.

"Just so," said Mr. Zoller. "Glad to hear it, I'm sure. Glad to hear your father's apprehensions about that invention were unfounded." He looked at Edith and back at Charley. "I

wanted a word with you in private, Mr. Vanaman," he said.

There was no need for Charley to bluster, but bluster a bit he did, and Edith felt that he was dangerously overplaying his part.

"I haven't any secrets from my wife," he declared.

Mr. Zoller smiled sourly.

"Then Mrs. Vanaman is a fortunate wife," said he. "This is a matter of business—"

"That makes no difference," said Charley.

"Very well, Mr. Vanaman. If that is your feeling, very well." Without being asked to do so, Mr. Zoller resumed his stiff seat, whereat Charley and Edith, unconsciously gripping hands, took places on a sofa opposite him. "I come from your sister," continued the lawyer.

Charley was about to say that he had supposed as much, but Edith, in a tone of innocent surprise, intervened:

"From Mamie?"

"Exactly, Mrs. Vanaman: from Miss Vanaman, whose trustee you, Mr. Vanaman, I believe are."

"Why—" began Edith.

But Charley cut her short. He was in for it now and determined to go through it in his own way.

"Just a moment, dear," he said. "Of course I am Mame's trustee. You know that as well as I do. If— Just a moment, I say, dear. If my sister wanted to ask anything about the estate, why couldn't she come herself?"

Mr. Zoller looked him steadily in the eye.

"I thought that that was a question which I had better not put to her," said the lawyer. "I wanted to ask it, but she expressed a desire to place the matter in my hands."

"Why," murmured Edith, "I'm rather surprised at Mamie. I know that she and I had a little quarrel—just the merest quarrel—but I didn't think—"

"Just so, just so," Mr. Zoller interrupted. "I could have written, Mr. Vanaman, but, having been your father's attorney as well as your sister's, I thought I had better call. Your sister

wants an accounting of the management of her estate."

The expected bomb had exploded, but, expected though it had patently been, Charley knew of no way to meet it save by a counter-explosion. Again disregarding his wife's endeavor to restrain him to quieter methods, he sprang to his feet.

"What!" he bellowed. "An accounting? My sister asks her own brother for an accounting?"

Mr. Zoller was painfully unimpressed.

"You have caught my meaning exactly," said he.

"Charley—" Edith tried to interpose.

Charley, however, did not heed. He was resolved to try again. He had worked himself into a genuinely righteous indignation.

"Just a moment, Edith," he said once more. "My sister!" he cried, turning upon the unresponsive lawyer. "My own sister! And she sends her attorney to do it for her! How dare she treat her only brother this way? And how dare you, Zoller, my father's friend, permit her to do so?"

"I take my client's instructions," said Mr. Zoller placidly.

"Her instructions! Her insults to your old friend's son, you mean!"

"As you please, Mr. Vanaman. It is not uncommon for the beneficiary of an estate to want to know what has become of that estate—not at all uncommon, I assure you."

"Don't try to be funny, Zoller. This is a serious business. I tell you—"

"Mr. Vanaman," said the lawyer simply, "if all is as it should be, there is no reason why you should think it serious."

"Do you mean to charge me—" Charley's face was purple. He leveled a shaking finger at his tormentor.

"Charley!" his wife admonished.

"I do not charge anything. Before you spoke, I could not have suspected anything. It was you who said this was a serious business. If all is *not* as it should be, you can't exaggerate its seriousness, Mr. Vanaman."

"Zoller—"

Edith got up and put her hand on her husband's arm.

"I'm sure, Mr. Zoller," she said, "that Charley wouldn't hurt his sister's feelings for the world. Except for me, there is nobody he loves as he loves Mamie. No wonder he is hurt, Mr. Zoller. I can't understand business, and so I don't know just what all this means, but I can see that somebody has been putting terrible thoughts against her brother into poor Mamie's head, and—"

"I'll see her myself!" broke in Vanaman.

"I think not," said Mr. Zoller quietly. "I had hoped that you would take this matter in the proper spirit, but from the way that you have taken it, I think I shall be justified in going to her at once and, as a duty to a client, informing her of my suspicions and instructing her not to see you."

"Mr. Zoller!" pleaded Edith.

"Leave this house!" blustered Charley. "This interview must terminate. Leave my house this instant!"

The lawyer bowed.

"We shall expect an accounting within ten days," he said. "In the meantime, I have no objection to leaving your sister's house."

He went out without listening to Edith's endeavors to undo something of all that had been done, and he left husband and wife confronting each other in a fear that began by expressing itself in mutual recriminations. As soon as the front door closed, Edith turned on Charley.

"Now you've done it!" she cried. "You must brag! You must try to bully him! You made him suspect—and now you've probably bragged and bullied yourself into jail."

Charley responded in kind.

"He suspected all along. He suspected because Mamie did—and you know what set Mamie against us: you set her against us. She's the easiest woman in the world to get along with, but you set her against us by never being decent to her, by fighting with her, and by telephoning to Tyrrell when I'd told you to keep away from him!"

They did not present a pretty picture.

Their faces were tense with something remarkably akin to hatred.

"You forget one thing," said the wife: "you forget that you gave the cause for suspicion. If you hadn't cheated your own sister there'd have been nothing to suspect you of."

"Who suggested my getting the power-of-attorney?"

"I did, but I didn't think I'd got it for a fool. Yes, that's what I said: a fool! You not only stole—you did it in such a way that you were sure to be found out sooner or later anyhow."

"Stop that!"

"I won't. You are a fool. Even now you're a fool. You're wasting time accusing your wife when you ought to be telephoning to Mame to come out and meet you, so as to get her away from Mrs. Hamilton's before this Zoller gets there."

She was right about that. Charley darted to the telephone in the hall, but within a few minutes he was back with his anger gone and only a helpless terror in his staring eyes.

"She won't talk to me," he gasped. "She says she's received instructions from Zoller. He must have 'phoned from the corner drugstore as soon as he left here." A last flicker of enmity flamed in his voice. "She says you made things the way they are; so, you see, it *was* you that excited her suspicions. It seems to be your nature to excite 'em."

Edith's anger, however, was not dead. "Suspensions!" she echoed. "Nothing wrong had happened when I quarreled with her. Suspensions! I'm sick of that word. I never once heard it from Jim, and since I've been with you I've hardly ever heard any other. Suspicion seems to run in your lovely family. If you hadn't had suspicions, you'd never have lost Tyrrell—you'd have all the money you needed now."

At the mention of Tyrrell, Charley's face changed. He forgot all else that she had said; he caught her hands.

"Oh, Edith," he sobbed, "we've *got* to have this money; it's jail for me if I don't get it, and I do love you, and there's nobody to get it from but

Tyrrell. I thought once about breaking the will, but it's too late for that now; it'd take too long and cost too much and bring out everything. We've got only ten days, and we can't find money anywhere but from Tyrrell in that short time. We *must* bring him back! Can't we bring him back? Can't—can't *you*, dear?"

He hung upon her answer.

"Perhaps I can," said Edith.

"Try! Please, please try for my sake. If you have to, you may flirt with him—just a little, you know. I won't be jealous any more, dear. I'm sorry I was. Forgive me! Do try—do, do try. For God's sake, Edith—for mine! You can do it, if you'll only try."

She heard him, and she thought that she understood. She was sorry for him; she was disgusted; she was elated.

"I'll try," said Vanaman's wife.

XIV

SPRING was in the air again, with all its ancient subtlety and all its ancient lies. The breezes were sweet with the odors of the world's renewal—and Edith was keeping her promise made to Charley Vanaman.

Charley watched and waited, torn by the pangs of that jealousy which he had sworn to avoid, and racked by fears lest the thing of which he was jealous should not succeed. One day of his scant ten days' grace passed. Then two and three. Was she playing with him? Was she in earnest with Tyrrell? Was she going too far and too fast? Was she going far and fast enough? He asked for reports from her and got them, but there were a thousand questions that he dared not ask.

As for Edith, she questioned not at all. She would not hurry Tyrrell, who seemed loath to hurry, but she would be in time; she would save Charley and then— Well, it was enough for her now to know that it was spring, and that she was spending more than half of her days with a man that, she no longer concealed from herself, she loved.

The game she played approached its crisis on the fourth day of her husband's respite. She had pointed out to him the need of investing something in the endeavor. Charley again tapped his sister's fortune; servants were employed and Tyrrell was asked to luncheon at the Vanaman home. Charley was to be there, but he was not to arrive until after his friend had long preceded him.

Edith and the Bostonian had talked for half an hour in the seclusion of the parlor when she at last—deftly sketching Charley as an unloved, but pitied, husband whose wife must suffer from his continued poverty—brought out the question of Tyrrell's financial aid.

Tyrrell bent toward her, his fine eyes aglow.

"If I do this," he said quietly, "I won't be doing it for—him."

She blushed. She was proud because of the evidence of her coming success in securing the money, and proud because that success was to be won entirely by her own charms.

"No," she said; "I suppose it will be because you believe in the sounder."

Tyrrell shook his head. "Not even that. In fact, I've been looking into the telegraphic situation a bit, and I'm not sure— But no, the only reason that I'd do it would be—for you."

She looked up at him. Her lips were parted; her breast visibly rose and fell.

"You mean—" she began.

"I mean that I don't want to see you unhappy," he answered; "I mean that I don't want to see your husband ruined financially; but I mean that, apart from that, I don't care two straws what happens to him. I'll do this thing, but I shall want my reward—I shall want you."

Her heart hammered in her throat. He loved her! Without hurting Charley—even by helping Charley, who must care more for his invention than for her—perhaps she could leave her sordid surroundings; perhaps she could rise to a world to which, she now knew, no amount of riches, when possessed by a man so coarse as Charley, could elevate her; perhaps, as she had parted from Jim, so she could now—"

She heard Charley entering the house by the clattering vestibule door. She caught Tyrrell's hand and pressed it. That pressure seemed a promise, and before the ensuing luncheon had ended, Tyrrell's cheque was in Charley's wallet next to Charley's heart.

XV

Nothing that Charley Vanaman had in all his life been called upon to do was harder than the thing that he had to do this afternoon. The money that Tyrrell had given was referred to by its donor as "just enough for a preliminary canter"; more, it was to be supposed, was to follow if the preliminary canter gave satisfactory results; but this initial sum would not much more than cover the speculations from Mame.

Her accounts could now be easily enough straightened out, and Charley was saved from Mr. Zoller; but the position of the invention was really little better than it had been before. There were other debtors still pressing; there was not the money required for an independent start. Should Tyrrell later make inquiries, it would be possible to pretend such a start and to say that the result had been failure—so that Tyrrell would not press as Zoller had done—but the sounder would still remain just where it had been, and its maker would be penniless.

Charley must take up again the dreary task of wooing the established telegraph companies. He must somehow win from one of them a hearing. If he got that, he could show Tyrrell a clean account, and they would both earn a fortune; if he did not get it, though Tyrrell could be convinced that his loss was unavoidable, Charley would be a pauper. It happened that, on the morning of the day of the luncheon, he had obtained the promise of an interview with an officer in one of the companies that were now his only hope, and Vanaman's elation had been proportionate; but the appointment was for that afternoon; he must leave the luncheon early—must leave Tyrrell and

Edith together—and he had, on entering his house, seen his wife looking into Tyrrell's eyes with eyes that Charley could not misunderstand. He must go away when it was impossible for him to explain Edith's attitude on the mere hypothesis that she was flirting with Tyrrell for her husband's sake.

"Once he'd signed this cheque, he acted as if he'd bought her with it," brooded Charley; "and she acted as if she liked being bought."

As he went his solitary way, that idea loomed larger and larger in his mind. He had told her that she might flirt—"a little"—if she found flirtation the only means of capture, but he had meant the verb "to flirt" to be interpreted in its narrowest sense. Tyrrell must have been given a promise; and though it might be well that the Bostonian thought that he was making a purchase, that Edith should fall in with this view was intolerable.

"What a mess I've got into!" he groaned.

And then came the question: who had got him into it? If Charley had never joined Edith in that conspiracy to cheat Jim at law, old man Vanaman's money would have gone mostly to old man Vanaman's son. There would have been no need to steal from Mame, no need to truckle to Tyrrell. With a burst of hatred for his wife, Charley declared in his own heart that, by teaching him to help in the cheating of Jim, she had taught him dishonesty, that through the conspiracy against her first husband, she had wrought the moral ruin of the second.

"And now," he concluded, "she's going to trick me just the way she tricked Jim!"

It was in this frame of mind that he entered the telegraph company's offices and sent up his card. The result was unexpected: there was returned to him a message to the effect that the official who was to see him had been suddenly called out of town and would not be back before tomorrow.

Charley cursed his luck. It was the last straw. Here he was on a fool's errand while Edith was amusing herself with another man!

"Oh, it's Mr. Vanaman!"

He looked up. Leaving the office by the same door by which he was leaving it, smartly dressed and prettier than he had ever seen her before, was Claire Girodet, his former stenographer. His face softened.

"Hello!" he said. "I'm glad to see you."

He was glad to see her. He had dismissed her on the plea of poverty, and their parting had been friendly. He had always liked her ready sympathy and quick understanding in their daily work together, always liked to look at her firm beauty, her vivacious face, her sloelike eyes.

She put out an ungloved hand and pressed the hand that met it.

"How's the sounder getting on?" she asked.

"Well enough. Are you working here?"

They had left the office and were walking down the spring-warmed street.

"Oh, no!" She tossed her black head.

"I only ran in to see one of the girls who's a friend of mine. I'm not working any more."

He looked at her again and saw that her clothes were better than Edith's.

"Married?" he asked.

Her eyes sought his face with a glance that was a caress.

"No-o," she slowly answered.

He understood. Here was something that, for a steady acquaintance, was beyond the reach of a man as poor as Charley Vanaman, and yet something for an evening, for a brief consolation, for a forgetting of the perils that were near and the treacheries that were being sworn against him.

They had reached a corner and stopped uncertainly.

"Which is your way?"

She nodded northward.

"You're going home?"

"I'd meant to. I'm living with a friend."

Charley saw again that her throat resembled warm ivory, that her skin was very white, her lips very red and her hair like a storm cloud. He thought of Edith uptown with Tyrrell, tricking her husband as she had tricked Jim.

"Are you expected back early today?" he asked.

"No," she said, "not today."

"Why not have an early dinner with me," he suggested, "and then take a taxi through Central Park?"

Their glances met again—met and confided.

"All right," she said.

Charley sent a messenger boy to the house. The note thus conveyed curtly announced that he would not be home to dinner because business connected with the invention would detain him downtown.

XVI

TYRRELL, left alone with Edith by the husband's abrupt departure for the offices of the telegraph company, rose and walked to the window. Somehow a veil of silence had fallen upon them when Charley was about to leave; now that he had gone, it seemed as if they could not shake it away. Their coffee was unfinished. Tyrrell stood, his back almost turned to the room, lighted and slowly smoked a cigar. Edith, at the extreme farther end of the room, sat looking at his tall, lean figure, silhouetted against the afternoon sunshine.

Not as if he were trying to trick the husband—indeed, he gave not a thought to Charley, now that Charley was in possession of his financial assistance—Tyrrell put his cigar aside. His face was alight. Edith saw that. Called by his glance, she rose and slowly approached him. He caught her in his arms.

"You *do* love me, dear?" he asked.

She gave a little inarticulate sob as she hid her head against his coat.

"Don't you know?" she finally asked.

Theirs was an impossible position; they were both clear about that. Though Charley had sullenly submitted on several occasions to what he must have seen to be love-making, he was not likely, now that the immediate reason for love-making was, in his mind, satisfied, to continue to submit. Edith knew in her own heart what her com-

panion could not know and what she could never tell him: that Charley had begged her to flirt—a little—with this man in order to extract money from him within ten days, in order to save Charley from disgrace and even jail. Tyrrell, unpampered, though of sufficient income to pamper himself if he chose, would never understand the man that had been pampered from childhood but had nothing now with which to prolong the pampering.

Ever since Charley had, a few days before, proved his dishonesty and, far worse, his lack of acumen to cover up his dishonesty and his weakness in asking her to extricate him from his predicament, Edith had looked upon her husband with open, horrified eyes. She saw now what she had done. She did not blame herself, for had not her "artistic life"—she always used that phrase when she remembered the days of uncertainty and over-certainty that she had lived in her previous marital existence—thrust her into the first sympathetic man's arms? And had not Charley's arms promised to be strong and enduring? With him she had been wise enough to know that financial independence was requisite to their happiness; but had she not been led to believe that Charley, an only son and a much loved son, would inherit the heavier share of a heavy enough fortune? Jim had failed her by postponing his success, if success it were—she did not believe that it would last—until too late for her to benefit by it; Charley had failed her by having an impossible father and sister, and by missing his chance to success. Tyrrell—

She was still young. The spring sang in her blood. She knew little enough of Tyrrell, but she knew that he loved her. Tyrrell had money of which no one could deprive him. She wished to make no further mistake, but she returned this man's love: that she could not deny.

It was already four o'clock. They sat side by side on the ugly, uncongenial sofa on which, not so many days before, Edith and Charley had sat during the ordeal of the Zoller interview. They

were still talking in absorbed tones of the difficulties of their position when the bell rang and Charley's note was brought in.

"He's detained by business," said Edith. "Something about the sounder. He can't be home till late tonight."

Their eyes searched each other.

"Why not drive in town," suggested Tyrrell, "get a cocktail somewhere and dine together? There's no reason for you to stay here—in this stuffy house."

There seemed indeed no reason against it, certainly no chance of meeting Charley, yet Edith hesitated.

"You don't know how angry he would be if—"

"But how can he? You'll be back before ten o'clock; we can dine early. At least we shall be together."

Why not? Why not snatch at the rare strands of happiness? Charley had been none the wiser for the luncheon; why should he learn of the dinner?

"I must dress—" she started.

"No," he said. "We can go to some quiet place. It's better not, I think."

She found herself agreeing with him. Edith was amazed to find herself trusting to any man's judgment.

"All right," she said, and went, softly singing, from the room, for her hat and gloves.

There was plenty of time—indeed, too much. So, when they saw a hansom with its sad cab horse waiting for fares, Tyrrell hailed it, and they started down Fifth Avenue, hand in hand behind the shelter of its little doors.

At Forty-second Street they were held up by a policeman and the traffic for three or four minutes. Edith saw an inquiring head thrust out of a taxicab window. There was no mistaking: it was Charley's.

She clutched Tyrrell's hand convulsively, but Tyrrell was looking unconcernedly in the opposite direction. If he had seen, he gave no sign; but Charley had seen: Edith convinced herself of that. When their hansom passed the taxi, Edith, her eyes fascinated, looked within. Charley was not alone; beside him, on the farther side, sat the stenographer whom she had got him to

discharge. Charley was not now looking out of the window; he was not looking at her. Indeed, his broad back was turned, as if to protect his companion from her possible gaze.

Edith drew back her beautiful head.

"Bob," she said, "don't you think the driver could get a little more speed out of this animal?"

XVII

SHE was home before Charley was, a few scant minutes before. She had made Tyrrell drop her at the door.

"No," she had said, kindly enough, and composedly enough, "don't come in. I want to be alone for a little while. I want to think things over."

Had he seen what she had seen? She did not know. She wished that he were a little less the gentleman—enough less to have commented on that glimpse of Charley if, indeed, the glimpse had come to him—but she knew him to be the sort that, seeing such a thing, would seem not to see it, would scorn to justify his course by any course which the husband of the woman he loved might elect to follow. So she said good night and went indoors, where, a prey to emotions that she resolutely refused to analyze, she waited for Charley.

He arrived almost immediately. At once scared by the encounter and angry because of it, he had left Claire immediately after the dinner that he had promised her and had then fortified himself with an unusual quantity of liquor.

"Well," she said as he entered the parlor, where she had lighted every gas jet, "I hope you were successful in the business that kept you downtown."

Her tone allowed him no chance to hope that she had not seen. He walked up to her.

"Yes," he said, "I was successful. I went in for that business because I saw you were going in for the same sort of thing."

The same sort of thing! He could compare his excursion in the company of a stenographer with the idyl in which she had been playing a part! Her cheeks burned.

"You never saw anything of the sort," she said.

"I saw you in that hansom with Tyrrell."

"What if you did? What if you did?" Her face was contorted. "You sent home word that you weren't to be here—you sent home that lying message about business; couldn't I go out to dinner with your friend and have nothing said about it?"

"My friend?"

"He's the best friend you've got. He's kept you out of jail today."

"Well, don't pretend it was only a dinner engagement. I saw the way you two were looking at each other when I came in for lunch. I saw the way you looked when I had to leave you—"

He choked.

She wanted to tell this man that she hated him, and yet, because she was still only the conventional woman who did unconventional things, she still more wanted to preserve her conventional honor.

"You told me I was to flirt with him," she said.

"I did not."

"You did. You told me to, and you know it."

"I said you might flirt if there was no other way."

"Why don't you finish it? You mean if there was no other way for me to get money out of him for you."

"All right, Edith. Put it that way if you like."

"Well, there wasn't any other way."

"Did you look for one?"

"Yes, I did."

"Very well. But what I said was 'flirt a little.' I didn't say you were to—"

"Go out to dinner with him? Where is the harm in that?"

"You know what I mean."

"I know what you did. I know now what you've been doing. You've been running around town with common women. You've been carrying on with that painted French girl—"

"Edith!"

"Oh, yes, you have! Don't try to lie any more to me. That low stenographer that you promised to discharge—"

"I did discharge her."

"From that place, yes," said Edith. Her nostrils were dilated, her hands clenched. "And then you gave her another sort of job!"

The difference between them was this: that Edith was, at least for the time, in love with Tyrrell, whereas Charley, though he admired Claire, had recognized at the outset that she was too expensive a luxury for him, had felt for her something that was only passing and had frankly admitted as much both to himself and the girl. He could therefore bear any insult aimed at Claire, but must resent, if he was to maintain the conventional husband's upper hand, any suspicion of his own conduct.

"I never did anything of the sort," he said. "Till tonight I haven't seen her since I fired her."

Edith sniffed.

"That's a likely story!"

"It's the true one."

"Then why did you send home that lie about business? You haven't business enough to keep you busy during the day. You never did like to work, and you've never worked. You've always lived on somebody else, and of course you've been seeing this French girl while you pretended to be at your office."

"Nonsense. How'd I get the money?"

"The way you got the other money, I suppose. Beg it, or—"

"I tell you, it's not true. I was kept downtown on business as I said I'd be, and on the way up I happened to meet Miss Girodet—"

"And I suppose she stopped her motor car and told her chauffeur to get down and call you over and offer to drive you home?"

"No. Just a moment, please. As I was saying—"

"Oh," Edith broke out, "I don't care what you were saying! I'm going to bed." She started toward the door, but flung one last word at him: "I know what you've been *doing*, and that's enough for me!"

Rage boiled up in him. Innocence protested, but he could not prove his innocence. He felt that she had tricked

him to the end, even to this mere detail of somehow capturing and maintaining the role of the injured party, when all the while she had betrayed him to Tyrrell. That he, the husband, had contemplated betraying her no longer counted with him. He felt only that he must gain the mastery.

"Stop!" he cried. He caught her wrist and flung her around until, panting from pain, she once more faced him. "I won't have this. We've got to be honest with each other once and for all. I know how far you've gone with Tyrrell—I know it as well as if I'd seen it; and you can't say anything that'll make me believe otherwise." The sound of his words whipped his anger. "I know what your game is. You're in love with him. You've ruined me. You made me a perjurer in that case against Jim, and now you're cooking up the same sort of a scheme with Tyrrell against me!"

His grasp hurt her, and the hurt tore away the last vestige of her caution. Her tone echoed his.

"Made a perjurer of you!" she yelled. Her voice rasped. Her lips were twisted with suffering mental and physical. "You jumped at the chance. You were born a crook. Don't put on moral airs to me! I know you! You've cheated your sister. You're nothing but a thief! Do you hear—a common thief! Why don't you answer? Jim! He was fifty times more of a man than you!"

She was tugging at the hand that held her. At the mention of Jim's name, Charley suddenly released his hold, and she tottered back.

As she tottered, all the venom that had been brewing in Charley's brain from the day that he went into court with her leaped forward. He struck her full across the face and, as she fell, rushed from the parlor.

Under the blaze of the lights, Edith lay on the floor. Partially stunned by her fall, and nearly fainting from the exhaustion following her war of emotions, she nevertheless heard her husband go into the dining room. She heard him open the compartment in the sideboard where she knew that the whiskey was kept. She heard the

clinking of glass against a bottle. Then she heard him repress down the hall by the parlor, without pausing to look in, and climb the stairs to their bedroom.

She knew what would happen now. The thing that she had come to dread would happen: he would nurse his anger upon liquor until he had drunk himself into a stupor. Yet now it came to her in a flash that this was no longer anything to dread. It was only something to use for the present occasion—to use in order that she might be done with it forever.

She lay quiet on the floor. She waited until she was certain that he would be too drunk to hear her moving about, or, hearing, to interfere. Then she went softly to the telephone and, a little later, softly left the house.

She was going to the man that was so different from Charley. She was going to Tyrrell, the man that had once reminded her unpleasantly of Jim.

Charley woke with the light of noon pouring into his windows. His head was splitting, and the bed seemed to pitch and sway. He turned his burning eyes to right and left; there was no sign of Edith. Then he longed for a drink of whiskey, for only one drink to steady his nerves and numb him against the dancing agony in his head. He reached for the bottle by his bedside, but found it empty.

The effort of seeking the bottle was almost too much for him. He sank back with a groan upon his heated pillow. He closed his eyes, and then, slowly, bit laboriously piecing itself to bit, the events of yesterday, the bottle of last night, came back to him.

He swore heavily. He got up and dragged a soiled dressing gown about him.

"Edith!" he called.

There was no answer, but peeping under the bedroom door was a bit of paper. Half guessing the truth, he stooped dizzily and scanned that half-sheet of notepaper. He sat on the floor and read its hurried lines:

"After what you have done to me, you can, of course, never expect to see me again. A

beating is not a ground for divorce in this State, but I'm sure there will be plenty of evidence of other sorts, and if you have any manhood in you, you will not stand in the way. As soon as I have seen my lawyer, I'll have him telephone."

He made no comment. He merely struggled into his clothes. There was still a little whiskey downstairs, and with that heavy on his breath he set forth to the offices of the telegraph company in which lay the last hope of the Vanaman Sounder.

An hour later he was a desperate and broken man. The offices of the telegraph company had demonstrated to him beyond all shadow of doubt that the sounder infringed upon a patent secured by a rival corporation, and Charley, who had staggered into Mame's arms at the house of Mrs. Hamilton and sobbed out the whole story of his wreck, was listening to the unaccustomedly firm tones of his sister:

"Of course I'll do what I can, but I will not do anything that Mr. Zoller thinks papa would have disapproved of. I'll come back to the house, for it was mine and not yours: papa always wanted me to have it. You can live there with me—by yourself. I'll give you a regular allowance, or Mr. Zoller will. It won't be as much as papa gave you, because you have lessened the estate, but it will be proportionate. You can have your old room, and I'll run the house and make everything as pleasant as possible. I'll do my duty as a Christian and as your sister, but my duty doesn't include living with a wicked woman such as Edith has proved herself to be, and my being your sister only makes it all the more important that I should follow papa's will and, now that I've got his money back where he wanted it, keep it all—all—in my own hands."

"But, Mame—" began Charley.

"That is what papa wanted," said she. "Mr. Zoller will attend to everything. It is what papa wanted, and I've got to think of him."

XVIII

MAME had her way. She had her way completely. For the first time in

her life, that weak woman found herself with the whip and reins of power in her hands, and these she used with the icy determination that is to be found nowhere in mankind save in the weak made strong.

Charley rapidly descended to a position wholly servile. She treated him as a child, as he feared her almost as much as he feared the stony-hearted Mr. Zoller, who directed and shared her power, whose voice was invoked as the oracle's in every difficulty and whom it finally seemed not unlikely that she would end by marrying. Vanaman felt crushed; he felt that his place in the household was something like that of an idiot aunt bequeathed to Mame's care by the preceding generation, or a piece of furniture too decrepit for use and too unfashionable for exhibition, but tolerated in the limbo of "upstairs" because a deceased but respected parent had at one time cared a little for it. He was given all the odd jobs about the house to do, and Mame found many; but he was distinctly discouraged from seeking any other employment where, as she put it, he might disgrace the family name, and he readily reached the point where, surreptitiously purchasing contraband tobacco and whiskey out of the meager allowance that Mr. Zoller punctiliously paid him on the first of every month, he ceased to care.

Even at the first that terrible attorney, who exercised so powerful an influence over Mame, reduced Charley to a terror that forbade him from asking questions of his sister. They had long since made certain of his speculations, and like the Psalmist, his sin was ever before him. To this situation he had no choice but to bow, and once having submitted, there was no chance of future liberty. Long ago he had been informed that he was to divorce Edith. He was told not to bother over the thought of Edith contesting the suit; that would be taken care of, and there would be no publicity. So Charley appeared before a master and answered questions that he had been informed would be asked in the words that had been previously supplied him, and one

evening Mame quite casually told him that the decree of divorce had been signed a week before.

That was a fair example of his entire present situation. The even tenor of the Vanaman establishment was thus preserved. Summer gave place to autumn and autumn to winter, and Edith was forgotten, and Mame reigned in her stead.

So, once again, that gipsy lad, spring, came running up the New York streets and singing as he ran. The children heard him first, as children are sure to do, and laughed under the budding trees in the public squares. Then the grown-ups began to give ear to his bragging lies and to pay heed to his swaggering promises, forgetting, as he loftily forgot, how sadly he had deceived the world a year ago. Mame even announced the fact that, although it would in no wise change her brother's manner of life, she would shortly become Mrs. Zoller.

Only very deep in his heart did Charley hear the call of spring or reckon with the announcement of his sister's approaching wedding. With Zoller actually in the house, he would be a little less comfortable than he was now, but to all intents and purposes, Zoller, or at any rate Zoller's orders, had for so long ruled there that this new change could hardly count. Charley had been informed that he was to "go along" just as he had been going, and he knew that nothing could set him free. So it was that, on a warm May evening, with Mame absent at her missionary society's meeting, he sat in his stocking feet under the gas jet in his own room, his hair a little thinner, his face a little redder and more bloated, and his eyes a little more like a bullfrog's than they used to be, and, with a scanty half-pint of whiskey beside him, smoked a cheap cigar, perused the evening paper line by line and felt but vaguely the summons of the season.

Then, oddly side by side in the paper, where Fate loves to play in strange proximities, his glance came upon two brief items of news. The one told how the French government had bought, for the Luxembourg collection, the portrait of

the painter's wife and son made by that celebrated American artist, James Trent. The other announced a "society engagement" between the daughter of one of the richest men in New York and Robert Tyrrell.

For a half-hour the lonely Charley sat with those items before his eyes, drinking his bad whiskey and smoking his bad cigar. He was long past swearing at the power which shapes the destinies of men; he was past anything save a mild regret and a sneaking longing. But one thing he saw clearly: he saw clearly that what had happened to him had happened not because he married a divorced woman, since divorce was only man's feeble attempt to remedy man's feeble mistakes of marriage; what had happened had happened because he and Edith had cheated at the game, had tried to win by ruining an innocent man and had so made the strongest bond between the pair of plotters the mutual knowledge of a mutual unworthiness and distrust.

Charley rather thought that he would like to tell her this. He would like her to know that he felt her no more to blame than he had been. A trifle befuddled by the liquor, for he was now as easily affected by it as in the days when he began drinking—the days before those days when he could take so much and show so little—he tiptoed downstairs to the telephone, wondering whether, by searching the directory, he could find the name of any old acquaintance that might know her present address. And, as he reached the hall, the 'phone bell rang.

He took up the receiver. It was as he had almost, for no discernible reason, expected: somewhere, out in the softness of that night in lying spring, Edith had also seen those two pieces of news in the evening paper and, moved by the realization of the same truth that had moved Charley, was telephoning to him.

"Hello!" she said, and he knew her voice immediately.

His heart beat swiftly, but it could never again beat so swiftly as of old.

"Hello!" he whispered, afraid to raise his voice in the house that was Mame's,

even when Mame was out of it. "This is Charley."

"This is—this is Edith."

"Yes, I know."

"Are you alone, Charley?"

"Yes, but—but not for long. Mame's at a missionary meeting. She'll be back any minute now."

There was a momentary pause. Then Edith's voice resumed:

"I was just wondering how you were."

"Oh, I'm all right. How about you?"

He heard her laugh bitterly.

"No worse off than I'll ever be, I suppose." She gave him an address in a somewhat shabby boarding house district. "In the last few weeks since—since I've been alone, as I always will be now, I've found out I can just keep alive on what Mame allows me."

This was more news for him.

"Mame? Does she give *you* an allowance, too?"

"Mr. Zoller does for her. He said she considered it her duty as a Christian to see that I didn't starve. How's the invention, Charley?"

He told her of his hopeless failure.

"So you're another of Mame's pensioners?" she asked.

"I can't move hand or foot without her permission," he peevishly complained. There were tears of self-pity in his rheumy eyes. "And I'm too busted up and too middle-aged ever to get a job again."

There was another silence.

"I'm sorry for you," he said at last.

"And I'm sorry for you," she returned.

"Did you—did you see tonight's paper, Edith?"

"About Jim?"

"Yes, and about—"

"Oh, I knew *that* a week ago. He was as decent as I suppose he could be. You needn't worry; I'll never see *him* again."

"I wasn't worrying," said Charley; "I was only wondering whether you ever thought of how it all happened, of how—"

She interrupted as of old, and her voice was full of hate.

"Think of that luck of Jim's. His

wife and son, too! Some people have all the luck. But his won't last forever, the beast—I'm sure of that."

She had always been sure of it. Somehow now, for the first time, Charley's ear caught, behind the tone of her hatred for Jim, a certain doubt of the grounds for her hatred, which must always have been there. What was doubt with her was certainty with Charley.

"Can't you come 'round to see me sometimes?" she was asking.

She now meant, it was evident, only what she said. Remarriage between paupers, and in the face of the forever disapproving Mame, could never be.

"Oh!" Charley caught his breath. "I'd like to; but if Mame ever found out—"

Edith's voice was softer. "You could sneak around once in a long while, couldn't you? I'm lonely."

That was it, he knew: she did not love him; her passion for him was long dead; but she was lonely without the one man left in the world with whom she had something in common, even if that something was only the memory of a mutual and ineffacious crime.

"I don't understand why *you* should be lonely," he nevertheless said.

"You'll know when you see me, Charley. I'm faded. I've had to worry, and that leaves its marks. Can't you come 'round? Won't you?"

"If Mame found out—"

"She'd stop both our allowances. Yes, I know. But just once in a while, Charley, you can trick her."

Charley gulped.

"Well," he said, "I'll try."

He laughed, they both laughed, at the idea of tricking Mame; she was the only person left for them to trick.

"Do!" Edith's voice was almost happy at this prospect. "Do try. If you will only try, you can work it. Nobody need know; you—"

"Just a moment, please," said Charley.

"There was something I wanted to ask you. It was about us—about the reason everything went wrong between us. I—" He groped in his poisoned mind, but the subtlety had escaped him. "I can't think of it now," he said; "but

when we have our talk— Oh, Edith!" He had heard someone at the front door. "Here comes Mame. I've got to ring off quick!"

"Good night," called Edith.

But Charley had not the courage to respond to that farewell. He hung up the receiver just in time to face Mame and Mr. Zoller, who, as was his custom, had gone to the place of the meeting to see her home.

"I thought I heard you," said Charley, "and I thought I'd just run down—"

Mame sniffed.

"Charley," she said, "you've been drinking again."

"No, I haven't, Mame, indeed—"

"Don't lie about it, Charley. I'm ashamed of you. And Mr. Zoller here, too! Go to bed."

He turned meekly and went upstairs,

and there, from his own room, he looked out at the stars and the warm, inviting, deceptive spring night.

He thought of Edith. Had he gone to the telephone because of what he had seen in the paper about Tyrrell? No, he knew that, had there been but that mention of Tyrrell, he would not have gone. He went because of that mention of Jim; and that was why Edith had telephoned. By a low conspiracy, they had made Jim serve their turn, and because of their conspiracy and its triumph, Jim had ruined both their lives. He had brought them together; he had driven them apart; he had taken their youth, their hopes, their means of livelihood; he had made them thieves and left them pensioners; and now, honored and successful, it was Jim who was once more drawing them together in a frightful and furtive companionship.



HEART OF THE WORLD

By Maxwell Struthers Burt

YOU'RE as lovely as a dawn of winds
Over the high hills calling:
Flush of gold as the last star fades,
Sound of water falling;
Here are flowers on the dew-wet green
And the throbbing note of a bird unseen!

Break o' the day, the dawn is yours,
And the hush and the stir and the singing;
The poignant scent of a canon rose
A small warm wind is bringing:
And oh, the stir of me, lift of me, thrill
As the first light renders fine the hill!

Hush o' the night, when the stars are free
And the wind brings word of the river,
Answering word from the listening dark
Where haunted aspens quiver:
Yours is the heart of those who pray
In the passionate, silent forest way.

THE THREE HERMITS

By William Butler Yeats

THREE old hermits took the air
By a cold and desolate sea,
First was muttering a prayer,
Second rummaged for a flea.
On a windy stone, the third,
Giddy with his hundredth year
Sang unnoticed like a bird.

"Though the door of Death is near
And what waits behind the door,
Three times in a single day
I though upright on the shore,
Fall asleep when I should pray."
So the first but now the second.
"We're but given what we have earned,
When all thoughts and deeds are reckoned,
So it's plain to be discerned
That the shades of holy men,
Who have failed being weak of will
Pass the door of birth again,
And are plagued by crowds, until
They've the passion to escape."
Moaned the other, "They are thrown
Into some most fearful shape."

But the second mocked his moan:

"They are not changed to anything,
Having loved God once, but maybe
To a poet or a king
Or a witty lovely lady."

While he'd rummaged rags and hair
Caught and cracked his flea; the third,
Giddy with his hundredth year
Sang unnoticed like a bird.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

By Susan Glaspell

WHEN morning came life was still lingering—that is, if what was left could be called life. It seemed less life than the delay of death in coming; less as if a living man was dying than as though a dead man were breathing. The doctor said there could be only a few hours more.

There was nothing to do in those hours. The time for an attempt at keeping life, even the time for a pretense at that attempt, had passed. All that remained was to sit there in quiet through that mysterious time when life and death touched.

She knew that her mother was worn out, and in any case she preferred being alone with her husband as she waited.

It was not that she would be alone with him because those last hours of what could be called life were precious to her, too meaningful for sharing even with her mother. She wanted to be alone because she did not feel what it would be expected she should feel.

It was May, and as the woman who was watching—waiting—looked from the window, she saw that the lilacs just underneath had come out in the night. That soft rain had won them. The raindrops still lingered, and now the sun shone upon wet flowers and leaves. She leaned out for a breath of them. But when it came up to her she drew back, and leaving the window sat down over by the far side of the bed.

She had been married in lilac time—in lilac time twenty-two years before. Suddenly she remembered coming into that very room to take off her wedding dress and put on her traveling clothes. And because everything about that day persisted in her memory, she re-

membered going to the window and leaning down—as she had so many times through her girlhood—for that breath of the lilacs. And at the heart of that memory lived another: a memory of the things that had been in her heart that day, things that had died the slow, unlovely death the man beside her was dying—died because the man by whom she watched had not let them live.

She tried not to think of that now. It seemed wrong, if not to him, to life, to be thinking those things while life was being conquered. But from where she sat she could see the lilacs blowing in the yard across the street—there were lilacs everywhere in their little town, her “home town,” to which she had come back with her sick husband—and she could hear the birds trilling out their joyousness in May. It was the opened window that made it hard to hold back memories of the time when her heart had been like the things out there; hard, even when he was dying, to free herself from the thought of how he had stilled in her heart that song of joyousness in May.

For a long time she sat there tense, trying, as she watched the man whom she had loved dying, not to think of how similarly disintegrating had been the death of her love for that man, not to see in this blight how blighting had been the death of her feeling for life.

She had been watching his face, watching, compelled by the horror of it, the way she could see death eating its way, when, hearing someone enter, she looked up.

It was her mother with coffee. “Drink this, dear. You must take something.”

She went over to the window, instinctively getting as far as she could from the bed on which lay a body that would never take anything again.

Her mother lingered; noticing chairs being carried out into the yard across the street, observing a good deal of bustle about the place, she asked, more to be saying something to her mother than because she wanted to know: "Why, mother, what's going on over at the Freemans?"

Her mother turned away; it was a reluctant voice that carried the reply: "It's a wedding, Marcia."

She set down the cup, and her handkerchief went to her mouth as though holding something back. "A—you say a wedding, mother? This morning?"

"Yes, a morning wedding, dear; they're taking the eleven o'clock train."

"They? Who? Whose wedding, mother?"

"Why, Helen's, dear; pretty little Helen Freeman."

She turned upon her mother. "That baby?"

Sadly her mother shook her head. "They don't stay babies, Marcia. Helen's nineteen."

"Going to be married," she murmured, "at nineteen?"

"You were only twenty, Marcia," was the low response.

She had turned from the window and was looking at the bed. Again, as her mother reminded her that she had been only twenty, her handkerchief was over her mouth as if pressing something back.

The man on the bed was picking at the covering. Instinctively she hastened to him, so hard was it to realize, when he could move like that, that there was nothing more to do for him.

Her mother was waiting at the door. "I thought, dear, if—if it came, if anything happened before they go, we would try not to have them know."

She nodded.

"Helen's such a dear little thing, and they're so in love—we don't want to spoil her wedding."

She only nodded again, and this time the handkerchief was once more at her mouth, as if pressing something back.

Her mother moved a step nearer. "You don't want me to stay?" For reply she shook her head and turned away.

She went back to her place at the far side of the bed, all the while her handkerchief pressed against her mouth. She was sitting there so still, afraid to move, as if moving would stir the thoughts—start them—let the things out of her heart, those things that now she must hold back with all her might because she must not spoil little Helen Freeman's wedding—the little nineteen-year-old girl who was so in love, thought she was going to be so happy. It seemed that far worse than having Helen know there was a death across the street would be letting loose those things that were in her heart.

The dying man's mouth had fallen open. She wondered if she ought to close it. It looked so terrible that way that it seemed cruel to leave it so. But perhaps if she closed it he could not breathe. Quick tears came in the thought of how helpless one was—how all unguarded against unlovely things—when life was giving way to death.

It made her so sorry for him! She raised him up, carefully wiped his face about the mouth, and, more than that, with one of those swift impulses of her passionate nature she tried to think kind things about him. She wanted to be tender to a man who was dying.

He had never struck her. He had not wasted in drink and gambling the money to give her food and clothing. Think of the men who did that! Indeed, he had been what the world would call a "good husband." Had she ever, as people said, wanted for anything?

Had she ever—*wanted* for anything? *Had* she ever—*wanted* for anything? It kept saying itself over and over, prying at the very door it had been meant to hold shut. *Wanted* for anything—*wanted* for anything?

She heard carriages and motors across the street. Had it begun? Was it over? Married at church and now coming home for the wedding breakfast? She could have seen across by turning her head that way. She did not; her hands were upon her breast—tight—

trying to hold things in there. Why, beside her a man was *dying*—and across the street there was a wedding! All of one's faith in life—best of one's feeling—should go to the man here who was dying and the girl over there happy on her wedding morning. But as the laughter from across the street came up to her, laughter of joy in youth that seemed to pass in waves over the bed and then envelop her, she could do nothing but meet the laughter with sobs.

Then another sound penetrated laughter and sobs. Quickly realizing that he was choking, she raised his head and moved it, her hot tears falling upon his face and mingling with the sweat of death that was there.

She was on her knees now, supporting him. It seemed she must hold him up. Death was very close. He would die if she did not hold him up, and the life in her had that deep instinct of life for fighting for every second it can gain from death.

His face had become so misshapen it seemed wrong to look at it. A long time passed while she was looking down at his hand. It kept moving a little—just because for so many years it had been moving, because muscles and nerves were used to moving. She was thinking of death; of how all human hands come to those last purposeless movements. She was thinking of what it must mean to one who loved; mean, after the love and tenderness of a lifetime, to watch the last movements of hands that had caressed and served.

Raising her head at last, she, too, needing breath, she saw that across the street they were having breakfast out on the big porch. Some of them had finished and were out on the lawn. They moved in and out among the lilac bushes, groups of boys and girls, laughing, sunshine falling lavishly upon them.

She again wiped the dying man's face, and when she looked back after that she saw Helen, the happy little bride. She was standing at the head of the steps, beside her the man she had just married—the way he was looking down at her told who he was. Helen was laughing

and calling out to her friends in the yard. Then she looked up to the man beside her. Ah, yes—that look she knew. She had looked that way, she supposed. She had felt that way.

And all the while it was going on! Helen was not the only bride in the world that day. That very day—every day—they were turning those radiant, believing faces to life. She had turned a radiant, believing face to life. She had been sure—as Helen was sure—as they all were sure. Oh, yes, loves failed, they knew. How sad it was, they would say—then quickly turn that glowing, trusting face back to life, smiling out their thankfulness that no such thing could come to them.

It seemed to her that more cruel than death were those wiles of life. The man she was holding choked again, and mechanically, almost unconsciously, she moved his head; but her protecting instinct and her sorrow were with the little bride across the street. She wanted to cry out to her: "But don't think life's going to give you what it promises! It just *gets* you—with promises—then crawls away and leaves you there to starve!"

A force strong as that sweeping the man out from life swept her back to it, back into those days before she had been driven to defending herself by trying to deaden herself, days before she had won any ground in the devastating struggle to bear life by not expecting great things of it. That light on the little bride's face had touched it to life: the joyous, confident demand upon life, and then the chill which little by little had crept on, much as this chill of death had in the last few hours crept upon the man whom now in a short time it would have claimed. But how strange that the things in her heart she had thought safely dead should be live enough yet for suffering! She flinched now in just the memory of how, stepping out eagerly into love's country, she had, time after time, been pushed back; memory of how she had stretched out her hands with gifts that were not wanted, were not even *seen*, and had been left there—shamed—not knowing what to do with

those offerings she had borne with so proud a joyousness.

Oh, no, he had never struck her; food and clothing for her body had been provided; the world would call him a good husband. But one thing he had not done. He had not claimed what she had to give him. Unclaimed, it tortured her until it had warped her to that state where life is bearable.

As again she did for him a little service, and saw the sure signs of how close was the moment when there would be nothing more for her hands to do for him, she tried again to do him the deeper service, send with him the kindly thought it seemed each human being must want to take with him from life. Outraged at herself, frantically resolved to turn to him—be kind, she called upon the thought of how there had never been any other woman, how he had been, as they put it, true to her. But out from that broke the thought that it might be easier to think the tender things had it been otherwise: if in some way, at some time, he had been true to life; if he had found something somewhere, given something to someone. He had been true to her for the same reason he had failed her. She was sure she could not be wrong in feeling that the tenderness she called for in vain now would have found its way from some spring in her heart had she been able to feel he had had greater gifts for someone else than he had had for her.

All the while came the laughter from across the street. Helen was out on the green now with her friends; they were gathered round her as she stood before a lilac tree—it seemed to be some happy little ceremony. She had a feeling of their being just an organic part of the May morning. With what pure, *unhurt* joy in life they laughed!

Of a sudden it seemed to the woman supporting the dying man that the rest of it would not matter if only she could win back from life a feeling of gladness in them. Through the sterile years even her love for love, her faith in joy, had withered. In some way she did not understand he had gone deeper than killing her love for him. He had

blighted her whole feeling for life. Something at the center had hardened, so that there had not even been what she felt would have been the more noble rather than the less virtuous part, an impulse to fight to keep alive the faith—hope—that some time she must find it.

Now the little bride had gone indoors. Getting ready to go away? Leaving the laughing friends—the loving mother—going now to take what life had for her? Turning that glowing, confident face to—*what?* The tears life has for life fell to the hand life had let go; it seemed to her so sad, so infinitely more sad than death, the way they hoped, the way they dared—their glowing faces, confident steps—over and over again that same old rejoicing in life's promises, that same world-old tragic trust.

But it was a softer face, a face more tender than tragic which a moment later bent over the man whose breath still came. There had been, and so simply wrought that she knew of no change, a cunning inversion from bitter sorrow that life would not keep the promises to a passionate wish that it might—hope that it would! Her lips were moving; and the prayer was not for the man who was leaving life, nor for herself, defrauded by it, but: "Be good to them, Life—oh, tender with them—knowing so little—asking so much!"

Into that same moment came the realization that these were his last breaths. Should she call her mother? It would seem she should not be alone, yet . . . She looked away, for in that last moment death was twisting life so ruthlessly, and she saw that it had been as she supposed. Helen had gone in to change her dress; now she was out on the porch, ready to go, the man to whom she turned for love and life beside her, her mother hovering on the other side, an arm about her, and all around her the friends, not laughing now, silenced by the moment.

The last sound of life in the dying man's throat she scarcely heard, held by that look on the happy girl's face as she walked down to the carriage.

PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT

By Owen Hatteras

LITANY: CANTO VIII.

From telephone calls, and from persons who think that it is devilish to read Strindberg; from sure cures for hay fever, and from the dithyrambs of Herbert Kaufman; from the piano debaucheries of Arnold Schoenberg, and from sabotage; from warts and wens, and from sport in all its hideous forms; from wedding wit, and from carcinoma; from women with pointed finger nails, and from newspapers with messianic delusions; from chivalry, and from malicious animal magnetism; from vice crusaders, and from Masonic funerals; from retailers of smutty anecdotes, and from the Lake Mohonk Conference; from spittoons, and from men who boast that they take a cold bath every morning; from heirlooms, Congressmen, eczema, college boys and suspicious wives; from home cooking, and from the Revised Statutes of the United States; from the Drama League of America, and from underdone mutton; from the pale heresies of Henry Van Dyke, and from the jokes in the *Ladies' Home Journal*—Good Lord, deliver us!

A WOMAN'S club is a place in which the validity of a philosophy is judged by the millinery of its prophetess.

THE pragmatism of William James: Pontius Pilate in words of three syllables.

SUNDAY SCHOOL—The first refuge of scoundrels.

THE SYMPHONY:

Allegretto agitato—The meeting.
Lento amoroso—The wooing.
Vivace con furioso—The marriage.
Allegro gioioso—The divorce.

AN ENGLISHMAN is one who bathes in a dishpan and eats pie with a spoon.

ALIMONY is the ransom that the wicked pay to the devil.

JEALOUSY is the theory that some other fellow has just as little taste.

AS MUCH as a woman may love and venerate her husband, she never goes so far as to seek one like him for her daughter.

VIRTUE—A form of coquetry.

CLEVERNESS, in women, means any mental state superior to imbecility.

As the arteries grow hard, the heart grows mushy.

TACT—A college bred lie.

AMERICAN PROVERBS OF TOMORROW:

Set a *ganov* to catch a *ganov*.

There's many a slip 'twixt the *shid-uchin* and the *chuppa*.

Many a true word is spoken by a *mar-shallik*.

No man was ever as *fromm* as a *bachur* looks.

The *goy* is not afraid of the *cherem*.

THE STANDARD American pronunciation of foreign proper names:

Dvořák	De-vor-ak.
Charpentier	Carpenter.
Havre	Have-'er.
Loubet	Lew-bet.
Moszkowski	Mos-cow-ski.
Brieux	Bruise.
Eucken	You-k'n.
Marseilles	Mar-sails.
Velasquez	Ve-lass-quez.
Rio de Janeiro	Rye-oh dee Jan-er-oh.
Don Juan	Don June.
Molière	Moh-leer.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—A patriotic pæan rendered by ninety million loyal Germans, Irishmen, Swedes, Italians, Russians, Frenchmen, Assyrians, Danes and Polacks; the pose in purpose; a name engraved on the loud pedal.

HEROES OF THE WOMEN'S CLUBS:

Mrs. Rorer and Metchnikoff.

Charles Rann Kennedy and Shakespeare.

Richard Harding Davis and Ibsen.

Orison Swett Marden and Nietzsche.

Percy Mackaye and Brieux.

Richard Burton and Wedekind.

Sylvanus Stall and Havelock Ellis.

Hopkinson Smith and Strindberg.

AT THE ALTAR:

THE BRIDE: "At last! At last!"

THE BRIDEGROOM: "Too late! Too late!"

IMPRESSIONS OF DRAMATISTS:

IBSEN—A clergyman sticking head first in a rain barrel . . . a college professor's low intrigue with a charwoman . . . *dementia præcox* . . . Ostermoors.

MAETERLINCK—Raindrops sliding down a pale, leprous rock . . . a blind nun lost in a den of lizards . . . a goldfish drunk on absinthe.

SARDOU—Sarah Bernhardt with her hair on fire . . . a cauldron of boiling blood . . . an empress captured by white slave traders . . . bugle calls in Hell.

SHAW—A witty speech from the scaffold . . . Anthony Comstock pursued by Marguerite Gautier, with Marguerite gaining every minute . . . a phonograph record of the Ten Commandments, running backward.

AUGUSTUS THOMAS—A lecture on Christian Science, with music by Harry Von Tilzer . . . a sparring match between Orison Swett Marden and Eusapia Palladino, for the Richard K. Fox diamond belt . . . New Thought limricks.

BRIEUX—An autopsy in a drawing room, with a concealed orchestra playing, "Oh, Promise Me!" . . . "Romeo and Juliet" by a coroner's jury, with the coroner as Romeo . . . kissing through aseptic gauze.

FAITH—A mellow and caressing ecstasy, a benign and uplifting booziness.

A MAN becomes a gentleman the moment the betting odds on his word of honor pass three to two.

It is better to have a conscience than to be run over by a locomotive.

THE ideal home is one in which the human inhabitants multiplied by fifty outnumber the roaches divided by one hundred.



THE PICTURES

By May Sinclair

THOSE drawings are all right. But if you want to see the most interesting things I ever did—interesting from your point of view—there!

No, you haven't got to say they're clever. Their interest—for you—doesn't lie in their cleverness or in the way they're done. It lies entirely in their sequence and in my utter unconsciousness of what I was doing. You'll see, if you'll go through them as they come, the gradual putting together of a man.

I tell you, I didn't know what I was about. I had my flashes, but that sort of continuous performance is your job, not mine. I was the blind instrument chosen by heaven to express Markham as he never could have expressed himself.

Who was he? Only a model, and an amateur, utterly uninspired, at that. He turned up as they nearly all do, on a Monday morning. Of course you get them of all shapes and sizes, but I wasn't prepared for anything so small, so weedy, so insignificant as Markham. It was inconceivable that he should offer himself as a model. If he hadn't been so shabby I should have said he was an agent for some commercial enterprise. He stood on my doormat with the air of a superior person who has called by appointment on important business. He asked me if Mr. Roland Simpson was in.

That was his first insult, his pretending not to recognize me as the lord of the studio. Of course he knew perfectly well who I was. I had on my old painting jacket, and I could see his little malignant eyes fixed on my palette and sheaf of brushes.

I said that Mr. Simpson was in, but he was engaged—excessively busy. And I declare to you that this thing—it had no appearance, mind you, of a man beyond its wisp of a mustache—this deplorable object on my doormat actually sniffed when I told it I was busy. It said it would call again later on when I was—not quite so busy.

He did call again. He called on the following Monday, when I was out, and on the Monday after that. He was weedier, shabbier, more insignificant and more contemptuous than ever. It was a perfectly beastly day—sleet turning to rain. He was soaked through and stood shivering in the pool he made. His face was all pinched and drawn and sallow.

I wasn't busy that morning and I said so. The admission, curiously enough, seemed to soften him; but only for a moment. I told him he had better come in and dry himself. He came in with the lofty reluctance of a man pressed for time and conferring a favor; and he took up a position before my stove for ever so long, with clouds and mists and long shreds of steam wreathing and writhing out of him. It wasn't till he had turned himself round and began to steam backward that he was able to look about him. Evidently he had never been in a studio before. He was taking it all in—the big north light, the platform for the model, the easels and all my poor properties. He seemed to be counting them, appraising them—their shabbiness and cheapness, I supposed—for some unintelligible purpose of his own. Then, when he'd finished his valuation, he gave—well, you can only describe it as another and infinitely

more complicated sniff. I can't tell you what there was in it: disparagement, hostility, defiance. Whatever malignity had been left over from his former attitude he pressed into that supreme, that implacable sniff.

I remember I mixed him some whiskey and water, rather stiff and hot, and I looked for his eye to kindle as I gave it to him. It didn't. He took the whiskey, took it as if it had been his birth-right that I had kept him out of for many years, but he drank it with no enthusiasm. He didn't even finish it. Whatever depths he had sunk to, it wasn't drink that had brought him there.

By this time he was firmly seated, and he presently made it clear that he was prepared to sit to me for as many hours, he said, as I chose. I broke it to him as gently as I could that I had no use for him.

He said: "Then I suppose I shall have to starve."

He didn't whine about it (from the beginning to the end of our acquaintance Markham never whined). On the contrary, he smiled like one calling your attention to a preposterous case. That he should starve while I was nourished, what, he seemed to say, could be more preposterous? He displayed a decorous, a perfect and superb detachment in contemplating the monstrous irony of the thing. He implied unmistakably that it was up to me to put an end to it. By my putting an end to it the purposes of eternal justice would certainly be appeased; but, as for him, responsibility in this matter could hardly be expected of him.

It ended by my engaging Markham to sit to me, from time to time, at three and sixpence an hour. But I told him again I was afraid I wouldn't have much use for him.

How little use I had those sketches you've got there will show you. First of all, there are only bits of him—not even that—bits of his clothes, a boot, a sleeve, a trouser leg. Then he comes—a hand, a foot; dozens of them. There are his toes, all crumpled just as he took them out of his boot. (No, he

hadn't any socks on that time. He went away in a pair of mine.) Then the figure—every conceivable posture, and all spontaneous. Then his face—

The faces frighten you, do they? They used to frighten me, some of them.

And then—

I'm afraid he wouldn't have liked you to see these studies from the nude; but you've got to; it's the only way you can get at him. And if he'd known how tender you are—I shouldn't show them to you if you weren't.

You *do* begin to see him?

I say, do you feel a draught from that window? You've got a cold or something, haven't you?

Oh, come, if I'd known you were going to take him that way—you mustn't, really. Yes, I know, it's his poor back. I couldn't bear it, either. There was something about it that fetched me, nettled me, every time. If it hadn't been for Markham's back I don't think I could have gone on employing him.

That? It *is* terrible. He's crouching down, do you see, by the stove to warm himself. He didn't know at first I was drawing him. He always shivered when he had his clothes off. The other models get used to it. He never did. Perhaps I oughtn't to have done it. It was pitiful—his posture. But I couldn't resist it. I wanted just that, the sharpness of the spine, and the strained curve of the lean hips—

That's not what you mean? Oh—he's looking round so queerly because he's looking at *me*. He hated me. I stood between him and starvation. I was the only thing that stood. That was why he hated me.

But I didn't realize the extent of it until I made him sit for the nude. I was tired of drawing Markham with his clothes on. I was just beginning to see something in him. I found that his precise type of insignificance was jolly difficult to draw. There was something subtle and elusive, as they say, about his character, his quality, the meanness of the little mean man.

And I was only half getting him. I felt that his face was powerless to ex-

press all the horridness of his horrid little soul. That, the essence of him, could only be revealed in its perfection through his whole body. He wasn't altogether valueless. There were possibilities there. The more I worked at his face, the more I wanted to see and to draw his body, poisoned, stunted and distorted by his soul.

But for a long time he refused flatly to sit for the nude. He said it was bad enough to have to sit to me at all, but there were limits to the degradation he was prepared to undergo. Though I mightn't think it, he had about him some last shreds of human dignity. And for a long time I respected his poor prejudice. I didn't press him to chuck it; though I considered he owed me as much for all the time I'd wasted over him in the beginning.

But at last the day came when I had to tell him that he needn't come any more. There was absolutely nothing more that I could do with him. As he knew, I only wanted him now for one thing, and since he objected—I put it to him that I couldn't go on drawing his hands and feet and face forever. There really wasn't—at least I thought there wasn't—an aspect of him that I hadn't got.

Well, poor Markham must have been at the last extremity. He consented. He suffered the ultimate humiliation.

After that his rancor became fierce and uncontrollable. Up till then he'd taken it out, as you may say, in faces. He'd never said anything. Of course I'd been aware of his contempt. He'd shown that pretty freely from the first, and I thought he resented the shabbiness of the scene in which he found himself. I'd placed him now as a broken-down valet dismissed for general incompetence. I fancied I perceived in him a flunkey's disdain for my way of living. I thought all the time that he knew, and wished to show me that he knew, I hadn't sold a picture since he came.

There, I own, I did him a great wrong.

There were moments when I longed to say to Markham that it was his fault if I hadn't sold a picture, and that if he

continued to come much longer I should be a ruined man; that he surely didn't suppose his appearance in my canvases helped me to sell them. But I didn't say it. I ought to tell you that Markham didn't take any interest in my canvases. He never strolled round my studio looking at them, cocking his head and making remarks, stimulating or otherwise. Like Miss Dancy.

Markham, by the way, hadn't realized Miss Dancy yet. If I had not concealed Miss Dancy from Markham, I had very carefully concealed Markham from Miss Dancy. That girl's sense of humor is ungovernable, and if I'd sprung Markham on her suddenly she'd have giggled in his face and hurt his feelings. Besides, she's a shrewd little cockney devil, and she's caught me more than once in flagrant philanthropy. She was quite capable of shoeing Markham off my doormat if she'd found him there.

Well, one morning he found *her*—in my studio. (The charwoman had let him in.) She had been sitting, in a purple kimono, with her hair down her back, and I think it gave him a perceptible shock to see that I employed another model. For a wonder I'd sold a picture—"The Woman in the Torn Gown." The Woman was Miss Dancy. She was saying the title was a "shyme," because her gowns were never torn, and I was trying to soothe her down when Markham popped in.

I called to him to come here. I said: "What do you think of that picture, Markham? I've sold it."

(I really wanted him to know.)

He looked at it, and he looked at Miss Dancy, and he looked at me. And he laughed out loud. A sardonic laugh. I'd never believed in a sardonic laugh before. Now I heard one.

He said: "I think it's just the sort of picture that *would* sell. What else did you expect?" Then a horrible noise came out of his throat like the growl of a savage animal. "Ar-r-rh! The Gr-reat Bir-ritish Public!"

Miss Dancy had turned round and was staring at him. To my immense relief she didn't giggle. There was

something in the stare, I suppose, that was too much for Markham, for he turned his back on both of us and stalked out of the studio.

Miss Dancy's stare went after him. He must have felt it in his spine.

She nodded her head as much as to say, "I know you," as the door slammed behind him. Then she spoke.

"Green-eyed monster! That's what's the matter with 'im."

I said the poor chap didn't know he had a rival. I said she was such a stunner no wonder he was jealous of her.

She said: "Me indeed! It's you he's jealous of. It's given 'im fits."

"But why? Why?" I marveled.

"Because 'e's a failure and you're a success, Mr. Simpson."

"Me a success?"

I'd never thought of myself in that light, nor had anybody else besides Miss Dancy, who was always kind to me.

"Yes, you," she said. "He can't stand your 'avin' sold that picture. Shouldn't wonder if 'e was a bit in the same line himself—come down like."

I remember we amused ourselves by arguing the point.

But, incredible as it may seem, the girl was right.

He called the next day about tea-time and I let him in. I hadn't any use for him, as Miss Dancy was sitting again that afternoon. But he was looking more than usually sharp and seedy, and I hadn't the heart to send him away with the sound of the tea things in his ears. So he came in and found Miss Dancy fairly in possession, seated behind the tea tray in my best chair, with an old coat of mine in her lap that she had been mending. Markham stood and glared at her, confirming my theory. She was in the purple kimono with her hair down her back.

When he had had his tea he did what he had never done before. He walked across to the other side of the studio where there was a whole row of the drawings I'd done of him. He asked me if I'd sold any of those? (I hadn't.)

I said I didn't sell my stuff every day, worse luck; and he turned on me as much as to say I lied.

Then he burst out: "You sell more of it, Mr. Simpson, than you care to own up to. But you can't deceive *me*. D'you think I haven't eyes in my head? D'you think I don't know the meanin' of all this here—statues—and busts—and Persian carpets—" He was staring and pointing at things. "Those 'angin's, and those disgustin' cushions all about—and you pretendin' you can paint the stuff that doesn't sell! I make no doubt you eat your bellyful"—I'm sorry, dear lady, but he *said* it. I ate my bellyful four times a day according to Markham. "You've only got to splash some paint down on a canvas any'ow, and you get your eighty and your hundred guineas for it. Everything you want you can get. Wine! Women!" He snarled it. (Miss Dancy had gone behind a screen with the tea things, and I could hear her giggling there.)

You've no idea how funny he was. The place was inconceivably shabby, worse even than it is now. I assure you, I hadn't a thing that to a sane mind would have suggested the smallest earning capacity. But Markham thought he was in a scene of brutal, terrifying and iniquitous opulence. He thought poor little Miss Dancy was my mistress whom I kept in luxury. It must have been the purple kimono that excited him.

"And you talk about your Art. Your Art!"

I took him as politely as I could. There was nothing else to be done, with Miss Dancy behind the screen all the time, dashing my teacups about to cover her giggles.

I said suavely: "And you have no use for art, Mr. Markham, as a Socialist!"

I really thought I'd placed him that time.

It brought him up sharp.

"It's enough," he said, "to *turn* me Socialist."

I put it to him that that was all very well, but hadn't he noticed that I never *did* talk about it?

He replied, with sudden astonishing coolness, that I was clever. I knew better than to talk to *him*.

And there's his face for you as I drew him, snarling. (I was drawing him all the time, only he didn't know it.) It shows you how far I'd got with Markham. With Miss Dancy's assistance I'd placed him as the unpleasant, peevish proletarian, the little mean man; with just a glint of insanity illuminating his meanness.

After that, Markham, who had been pretty continuous for nearly two years, suddenly left off coming. I remember thinking that he was probably ashamed of his own outburst, or else a little frightened.

Then one day I came on him in Kensington Gardens. He seemed to be crouching like a wild thing among the trees. I got him sideways on. I could have spotted the curve of his spine a mile off, but I couldn't make out what he was doing.

As I came on I saw that he was really sitting on a campstool. He had a canvas on his knees, and a palette. I could see it and the gesture of his hand. He was painting.

It was one of those late afternoons in September when you get lots of blue and purple and gold in the Gardens. The grass was a divine green, and Markham must have had a perfect pool of it in front of him, with a clump of trees beyond. I could swear to the bit he was trying to do, because I'd done it myself from the very same place.

Presently he got up and packed his things and came toward me. I noticed how awkwardly he carried his wet canvas. I was going southward down the Broad Walk, and he was heading northwest in the direction of Notting Hill Gate; so that the sunset caught him splendidly as he came.

He was walking rather fast, very upright and with his head in the air, walking under light as if under water. But that didn't account for the look on his face. It was the look of ecstasy, and the effect of it—on *that* face—was perfectly uncanny.

He went clean past me without seeing me.

If he'd seen me I think he'd have shown some self-consciousness. He was

plunged deep, immersed in his dream, his vision. He seemed to float, to drift by me in it.

Uncanny.

It was as a visionary that I knew him next. There! That's how he looked when he brought me his pictures. Wonderful, is it? It's the only wonderful thing I ever did, and it isn't half as wonderful as he was.

His bringing them, of course, was only a question of time. I think he'd been saving them up, putting off with a voluptuous delay the moment when he should confront me with them—with his genius, you know—and crush me. He must have been brooding for months over this exquisite revenge. You see, he hated me—hated me; and there was no other way he could think of to get back on me. He was tired of insulting me. It didn't really satisfy him.

Besides, he had his vanity.

So he brought his pictures. There were about a score of drawings in a ragged portfolio, and half a dozen or so of canvases. He didn't spring them on me all at once—he was too great an artist to risk spoiling his effect; he waited till I went off to wash my hands, and then he whipped them out like one o'clock and stuck them up, all in a row, in the best light in my studio, as if he were giving a one-man show there.

And when I came back he was ready for me.

He said: "There! If you want to see the stuff that doesn't sell—look *there!*"

I looked—at Markham. I was afraid to miss a second of him. His face was working in a sort of frenzy, and he waved his hands with wild gestures.

He said I needn't be frightened. He didn't want me to buy one. The pictures, he explained, were not for sale. Never in his life had he sold a picture. He would as soon think of selling his wife's honor or his own. Rather than prostitute his genius by selling a picture, he preferred to strip and stand naked on that platform.

He seemed to have exhausted his frenzy in that evocation of supreme

abasement. All of a sudden he became extraordinarily still. He said I needn't suppose that he was jealous of my success, or that he grudged me one shilling that I earned by my unfathomable ignominy. He might have been some great calm judge, merciful but incorruptible, pronouncing sentence on me. I needed all I could get, he said, to make up to me for the shame and the torture I must suffer in turning out bad work. Millions and billions of pounds would never have made it up to *him*. As it was, nothing could give him, nothing could take from him the blessedness of his state and the unsurpassable splendor of the things that he had seen. His genius was unrecognized now; but what *was* "now"? Why should he worry about a little miserable fraction of a century, when he knew, with an absolute and self-sufficing certainty, that the everlasting future would be his?

I haven't given you precisely his own words, but that was the substance and the spirit of what he said. His certainty, his denunciation and defiance, the sense of rapture and of vision that he created, were the most magnificent things of their kind that I have ever come across.

And the pictures? Oh, the pictures were deplorable. Worse, far worse, than anything you can imagine.

Don't look so unhappy. They didn't matter. It was the dream that mattered. The perfect artist may exhaust his dream by too complete embodiment. Think of the stuff Markham must have had *left over*? Surely you wouldn't have had him debase his vision by anything so banal as accomplishment? No—no—no! He kept it fine, he kept it pure, imperishable in its own spiritual medium. Why he should ever have tried to paint at all I can't think.

Yes, I thought I'd got him that time—a flash of him—the inspired absurdity he was. It just shows you that inspiration may exist independently of the smallest capacity to produce.

A little mad? Perhaps. But what a benign madness! I declare I envied him. He was safe—safe—safe.

I thought *that*—his divine frenzy—was the end of him as far as I was concerned; that he'd gone off in a blaze of glory. Months passed and he never turned up.

Then a note came, a little dirty note, giving Star Street as his address. He intimated that he was willing to sit for me again if I would make an appointment.

I made one for a day a week ahead. It came. But no Markham. He sent, by a late post, another dirty little note to say that he was ill and that his wife was ill. He hadn't been able to come—didn't know now when he would be able.

The wording of that note struck me as suggesting more misery than Markham could bring himself to tell.

I went over the next afternoon to look him up. I didn't know where Star Street was. But I found it somewhere near the Edgware Road—a street of considerable squalor; and finally I found Markham.

It was in an awful little room on the top floor, and the landlady said I might go in. But I didn't go in. I stood for two seconds on the threshold and saw what I had no right to see.

Markham, in his day clothes, was sitting beside a bed that faced the door. I couldn't help seeing it. I couldn't help seeing him. He was leaning over the bed, as he sat, and with his right arm he held, supported somehow, a woman. He had raised her body half out of the bed, propped on her pillows. Her nightgown had fallen open, showing her starved breasts. Her head was dropping, all limp, toward his shoulder. The face was livid, the lips drawn up stark from the teeth, the eyes staring.

No, she was alive then; but she didn't look it.

To this face Markham's face was stretched—almost touching. And the look on it and the whole gesture of his body was indescribable. It had the impetus of passion, and defiance—defiance of death—and, above all, tenderness. A terrible, straining tenderness.

I don't think he knew when I came or when I left, yet I'm certain he knew I

was there, for he moved his other hand—his left—and drew her poor nightgown close. But he showed no resentment of my presence. He was past that.

I went to see him again. Afterward. She had died that night.

There was nothing you could do for him except to pay the doctor and the undertaker. I believe he hated me for that more than ever. It rubbed it into

him, you see, that I could do what he couldn't. . . .

This picture—here—is the end—my last sight of him. From memory, of course.

How could I? You think I oughtn't to have done it? But—I had to. It was, in its way, the most divine thing I ever saw.

Besides—after all my shots at him—it's the real Markham.



A WOMAN OF THE STREETS

By Charles Hanson Towne

I WISH I had not seen them—

Peach bloom, pear bloom and apple blossom white,
Swaying in the wind like candles in the night.
I wish I had not seen them hanging on the bough—
For I am in my city chains, city weary now.

I wish I had not seen them—

Long, long lanes, and hawthorn rows of glory,
Bright-bannered mornings with the good God's ancient story
Writ in red embroidery on the far, high hills—
I wish I had not seen them, for now their memory kills.

I wish I had not seen them—

The ranks of scarlet poppies dancing in the corn
When the world lay easy on the heart of the morn;
And the shining battalions of the surging rain—
I wish I had not seen them, for they bring me pain.

The hard, grim stones in the gray old town,
The dull days, the sad days, they weigh me down.
But heavier is my soul for the lost things good and sweet—
Oh, I wish I could not see them when I walk the iron street!



ONLY the good are never found out.



THE Original Missourian led the first vice crusade.

A BALLAD TO A FRIEND

By Richard Le Gallienne

SORE in need was I of a faithful friend,
And it seemed to me that life
Had come to its much desired end—
Just then God gave me a wife.

I had seen the beauty of fairy things,
And seen the women walk;
I had heard the voice of the seven sins
And all the wonderful talk.

Ah, the promising earth that seems so kind
And the comrades with outstretched hand,
But did you ever stand alone
In a black, forsaken land?
Then the wonderful things that God can do
One comes to understand—

How he turns the desert dust to a dream,
And the lonely wind to a friend,
And makes a bright beginning
Of what had seemed the end:
'Twas in such an hour God placed in mine
The moonbeam hand of a friend.



TEMPERATURE without temperament is useless.



IF men were permitted to have two wives one would surely have no resemblance
to the other.



AT the banquet of life women always ask for that which is not on the
bill of fare.

IN THE PUBLIC EYE

By W. Pett Ridge

"GREAT success again," he repeated, moderating his tones in obedience to his wife's appeal. "No less than two people came up after the meeting and said they'd never heard me before."

"Did they say they wanted to hear you again? And had you got some cards about you, Millet?" asked the quiet little woman.

"If I decide to go in more for public life," he said, deliberately, "you must understand that I do so on public grounds, and not by any means with a desire to push and to forward my private business."

"Can't you combine the two?"

Mr. Millet gave an impatient jerk of the head and was about to reply sharply, when he caught sight of the *Mercury* lying folded at the end of the kitchen table. He dodged underneath the line of small garments suspended from one wall to the other, and seized it eagerly.

"Twice," he murmured contentedly. "Twice in the same paper. Listen, old girl. This is under the heading of 'What We Think.' It says that 'Our friend Mr. Millet, of the Broadway, in a maiden speech at the Tradesmen's dinner the other night, almost electrified his audience by his references to the high rates of the borough and the condition of the wood paving.' And then on this other page it says, referring to the same evening: 'Mr. Millet also spoke.'" He rustled the newspaper exultantly. "Is that good enough," he demanded, "or is it not good enough? 'Electrified the audience!'"

"Almost," remarked his wife.

"There's a ring in the shop."

"Can't you answer it?"

"I can," she said, "but I'm not going to."

He returned with the information that it was a demand for an estimate concerning an inconsiderable job. He protested against doing things in a hurry; she fetched some memorandum forms headed "Bo't of W. J. Millet, Builder and Undertaker" from the shop, and said that things not done in a hurry were often not done at all. Whilst she crept upstairs to ascertain whether baby, with the cunning of youth, was shamming sleep, he complied with her orders, and as a reward (after she had made a fair copy of the letter, his writing and spelling being open to misapprehension) she gave him her ears for half an hour whilst he drew attention to matters of imperial importance. At the end she announced that she could not be sure whether he had talked sense, or whether he had talked nonsense, but she could say, without fear of contradiction, that he had talked too much, and she strongly doubted the wisdom of becoming heated over grievances that could not be remedied.

"But they can," he shouted. She pointed a warning finger to the ceiling. "I say they can," he repeated in a whisper. "What's more, I mean to do it. And I now make an appeal to you, old girl. I ask you, as husband to wife, not to be a drag, not to be a brake, not to constitute yourself a drawback. We live in an age when—I'm giving you the words that I used at the meeting tonight—when every soldier can become a field marshal, and every man who takes an interest in local affairs can work his way up and up and up until at last he finds himself—where?"

"The bankruptcy court."

"No," he said. "Taking a seat in His Majesty's 'Ouse of Commons."

"Why," she cried, wrathfully, "you can't even rely upon yourself for aspiring your aitches!"

"It's getting so late."

"Spell 'receipt,'" she challenged.

"I'll go and turn the gas out in the shop," he remarked, "and put up the shutters. What time did William and Fred knock off work?"

She informed him curtly that the two men had left immediately his back turned the corner; he mentioned that whilst he had a great admiration for the working classes in general, he felt bound to say that in the individual, a certain amount of looking after, of superintendence, of overseeing, appeared necessary.

Mr. Millet rose early the following morning and did a good day's work, keeping the two men well in hand and completing an order; he would have spoken to them on one or two subjects that occupied a corner of his mind but, having reproved them for showing so much anxiety in regard to a three thirty race of that afternoon, he could not well substitute another outside topic for discussion. Consequently at the hour of six Mr. Millet had a large amount of pent-up oratory, and some of this he gave to the amazed baby boy, but on astonishment giving way to fear—the infant appearing to gain the impression that the denunciations of society were leveled particularly at him—the wife interfered and, ordering Millet out of the house, danced the baby into forgetfulness and soothed him. Millet came home late, and at breakfast gave the proud information that he had been selected to take the place of a delegate at a conference to be held at the Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street, a conference of such magnitude that it might last one day, two days or three.

"Why," he said cheerfully, in reply to her question, "you'll have to muddle along as best you can, old dear. I can't be always at your beck and call."

"So it seems."

"Put the customers off if they come

round bothering. Say they've got to take their turn."

"They'll take their custom elsewhere."

"Let 'em," he said valiantly. "I'm not going to be browbeaten. They mustn't look upon me as a slave to be ordered about 'ere, there and everywhere. I only wish you and the baby could be there tomorrow to hear me get up and talk to that"—he took a deep breath—"vast aujience."

"The dear pet's out in his perambulator," she remarked swiftly, "and I needn't be afraid of anyone overhearing me but you. Millet, I ask you to give up this nonsense. Don't shake your head like that until you've heard what I have to say. A lot of my people dropped me when I married you—"

"You'd had the advantage of a better education. That was why."

"I had taken advantage of a better education," she corrected sharply.

"I was all for playing games when I was at school."

"And you're all for playing games now. If I could manage the business it would be different. What I want to point out to you is that I don't want to live all my life working hard morning, noon and night, and with only an odd girl to come in and take baby off my hands for two or three hours. I want to be able to look forward to the time—I'm in no hurry, but I'd like to see the prospect—the time when we shall be living away from the shop in a nice little house, with pleasant neighbors and a couple of servants of my own. And I want to think that when our boy grows up—"

"These things don't 'appen in a day," he urged.

"They won't happen in a lifetime," she cried, "if you neglect the business and give up so much time to looking after the affairs of other people."

"It's my duty to take my share—"

"You're not content, Millet, with taking your share; you want the share of twenty people. And you know as well as I do that you wouldn't take any share at all if you weren't so conceited at hearing the sound of your own voice."

He was so clearly convinced that the incident had terminated that just before leaving he called out for advice on the question of wearing frock coat and silk hat, or bowler hat and blue serge; she remarked that this depended on whether or not it was intended to be a fancy dress affair, and he said, cheerfully, that when it came to satire there was no woman on the south side of the river who could hold a candle to her.

He reported each evening the events of the day's proceedings, and at the close announced that the conference had been a triumphant success. Millet himself had spoken no less than seven times and had still much to say. The London newspapers had not mentioned his name; this, he hinted, said little for the wisdom of their managers, but he confessed that he pinned his faith to the *Mercury*, for there was a fair-minded local journal always willing to refer by name to any resident whether he advertised or not. On the Friday afternoon he sent William and Fred, alternately, to purchase an early copy of the paper, and each absented himself for a considerable period, applying, according to statement delivered, at all sorts of distant shops, likely and unlikely, in the desire to fulfill the commission. It was left to Mrs. Millet to discover the first lad selling the weekly journal, and she was glancing at it when her husband came in.

"After you, my dear."

Giving it up to him at once, she took some shavings and went out into the back yard where she and the baby boy had rare good sport in pelting each other, the young man being adjudged, in the result, winner and champion for his weight and age. To them, as baby was being dusted and congratulated, came Mr. Millet, a droop at the corners of his mouth, surprise and regret indicated by his features.

"Very unkind and most uncalled-for," he complained. "Down here, where my thumb is. If they can't fill the paper up with something better than that, they'd better by half either leave the spaces blank or stick in some poetry. Read it for yourself, my dear."

She agreed that the paragraph might

have been worded differently, but pointed out that, being down in the corner of a page, very few people would read it and those who did would not be likely to guess to whom it referred. She counseled him to reconsider his decision to write a letter of protest, for that would be an admission that the cap fitted him; the better and more dignified plan would be to ignore it. Public men had to endure this sort of thing.

"What I don't like," he contended, "is the part where they say something about me having no sense of humor. And where they advise me to jump from grave to gay, from lively to severe. I can't help being an undertaker. My father left me the business, didn't he?"

"Take care," she counseled, "that you leave it in your turn to somebody else. Now then, baby; up on mummie's back and be a jockey."

"It's annoying," he insisted—"that's what it is, and there's no two ways about it. I've a jolly good mind— Why, upon me word, if 'ere isn't another nasty snack at me! Under the 'What We Think' heading! Listen to it!"

Her opinion was that this went, so to speak, very near to the edge, but she pointed out that people whose desire it was to get their names into print could not always dictate the references, and that, in these matters, one had to take the rough with the smooth.

"All very well to talk, my dear," he said, sniffing. "I take these matters more to 'eart than some people. What do they mean by challenging me to repeat the line, 'The horn of the hunter is heard on the hill'?"

Millet absented himself from his club and applied his energies to work. William and Fred more than once made bitter references to the lives of men who wrote for the newspapers, expressing the opinion that these were no better than they should be; William instanced the particular case of Lord Byron. Their master agreed that literary men were mainly recruited from the scum of the earth, and doubted whether a decent tradesman would be justified in touching them with the end of a pitchfork, but, having said this, discouraged further

conversation and reminded the two men that they were paid at so much an hour, not to discuss public topics but to work under his direction. He took more cheerful views by Tuesday, and on the evening of that day remarked to his wife and to the baby that it would puzzle the *Mercury* in its midweek issue to find anything fresh to say in regard to his public actions. Obtaining a copy at the earliest possible moment, he read it through anxiously and rapidly, brandishing it afterward about the shop and declaring that it took very little to frighten these newspaper men. One had but to stand up to them and they wilted and crumpled directly.

"Where am I off to, my dear?" he repeated, as he changed his collar. "Only just going to run up to town. Keep a general eye on everything whilst I'm away."

"You won't be long gone?"

"Not unless I'm detained by any political engagement," he answered importantly. "There's one or two things going on—rather a busy time, you see, in London."

"It ought to be a busy time down here," she remarked.

"Now, now," warningly. "Don't forget what I said before. If you can't do anything to assist political movements, my girl, at least take care not to obstruct them. Good-bye, baby; daddie's going in the puff-puff." He gave, for the benefit of the child, a short imitation of a locomotive and ran off.

On Friday you might have seen Mr. Millet walking round the shop between planks of wood and dodging trestles, scrunching under his foot shavings and talking to himself in a vehement whisper. Two boys came to the window, flattening noses there, and he made a feint of rushing out to capture them; they affected extreme terror, staggering back three paces. A postman came along, and lifting them aside, entered the shop, said it was a fine evening and placed upon the counter near to the book of wallpaper specimens a letter for Mrs. Millet and half a dozen newspaper packets addressed to her husband. Millet tore them open and found, as he ex-

pected to find, that they were all copies of that day's *Mercury*, marked in various places either with crosses or with something like a pointing finger.

"My friends," he said bitterly, "seem uncommon anxious I sha'n't miss anything."

A column on page four was sprinkled with lines of poetry, not in the form of sonnets or triplets but all in the more vulgar model called a limerick. They were inserted in a careless way, here following "Testimonial to a Secretary," here coming after "Runaway horse in High Street," here succeeding "Local Successes at Trinity College." He rubbed his face with his handkerchief and went over the first one again.

There was a young tradesman called Johnson,

Who thought he would like a new billet.

"If the King is resigning let me just write a line

in
Where'er the throne's vacant I'll fill it."

"All very well," he argued aloud, "to stick in the name of Johnson, but I see clearly enough who it's meant for. How does the next go?"

There was a young builder named Simpkins,

Who'd a business but wanted to kill it.

He remarked: "My great aim is to make a new

name;
I'd like to be Quelch or Ben Tillett."

"If I couldn't write better poetry than that, I'd—" He was moved almost to tears. "I admit I've been attacking people lately, but no one can say that I've ever overstepped the bounds of good taste. At any rate, whatever I may have said in the 'eat of the moment, I never went and printed things like this about 'em."

Two raps came, signifying that tea was ready. He threw the journals under the counter and went moodily into the back room.

"You wouldn't be singing like that," he grumbled, "if you had to put up with all I have to put up with. Are you aware, my dear, that I've lost a couple of good jobs this week?"

"Oh, well," remarked his wife encouragingly, "you can't be expected to do everything. You've been taking a special interest in questions of the day. There's always that satisfaction for you."

"I'm not so sure—I wish to goodness you'd leave off 'umming for a minute—I'm not so sure whether there's any satisfaction to be got. Seems to me, so far as I can judge, that there's more kicks than 'apence about it."

"Don't say that, Millet," she begged. "I don't like to see you changing your mind in this manner. It's your duty to take a share—"

"Excuse me for contradicting you, but that's where you, woman-like, make a mistake. That's where you go wrong. That's just where you go off the main line of argument. If I'd got an ample income it might be a different matter, but things being as they are, whatever duty there is I owe first to myself, second to you, third to the boy."

"Think so?"

"It isn't a subject where I think," he contended hotly; "it's a subject where I know. Supposing there should be some success in the direction you speak of—and that, mind you, is by no means so certain as you appear to imagine—why, I should only share the credit with

a lot of others. Whereas, if I stick to the business and concentrate my efforts, if you understand my meaning, why, when the boy grows up— Is that his voice?"

She brought him in from his journey in a mail cart, giving on the way, in the interests of peace, the letter which had come by post. The baby agreed to let her have the contents providing the envelope was returned to his keeping, and she went to the window to read. It had been re-enclosed from another address, and the letter said that the Editor would be pleased at any time to insert further personal and chatty paragraphs of local interest from his new contributor.

"From your sister, isn't it, my dear?"

"I can't be bothered," she remarked, tearing up the letter. "If I'm always going out, it means neglecting the home."

"Now I'm very pleased," said her husband, "very pleased indeed to see you take that right and proper and common sense view. I mean the view that I take myself!"



CHALLENGE

By Louis Untermeyer

THE quiet and courageous night,
The keen vibration of the stars,
Call me, from morbid peace, to fight
The world's forlorn and desperate wars.

The air throbs like a rolling drum—
The brave hills and the singing sea,
Unrest and people's faces come,
Like battle trumpets, rousing me.

And while life's eager banner flies,
I shall assail, with raging mirth,
The scornful and untroubled skies,
The calm complacency of earth!

A MOUNTAIN GATEWAY

By Bliss Carman

I KNOW a vale where I would go one day,
When June comes back and all the world once more
Is glad with summer. Deep with shade it lies,
A mighty cleft in the green bosoming hills,
A cool, dim gateway to the mountains' heart.

On either side the wooded slopes come down,
Hemlock and beech and chestnut; here and there
Through the deep forest laurel spreads and gleams,
Pink-white as Daphne in her loveliness—
That still perfection from the world withdrawn,
As if the wood gods had arrested there
Immortal beauty in her breathless flight.

Far o'er-head against the arching blue
Gray ledges overhang from dizzy heights,
Scarred by a thousand winters and untamed.
The road winds in from the broad riverlands,
Luring the happy traveler turn by turn,
Up to the lofty mountains of the sky.

And where the road runs in the valley's foot,
Through the dark woods the mountain stream comes down,
Singing and dancing all its youth away
Among the boulders and the shallow runs,
Where sunbeams pierce and mossy tree trunks hang,
Drenched all day long with murmuring sound and spray.

There, light of heart and footfree, I would go
Up to my home among the lasting hills,
And in my cabin doorway sit me down,
Companioned in that leafy solitude
By the wood ghosts of twilight and of peace.

And in that sweet seclusion I should hear,
Among the cool-leaved beeches in the dusk,
The calm-voiced thrushes at their evening hymn—
So undistraught, so rapturous, so pure,
It well might be, in wisdom and in joy,
The seraphs singing at the birth of time
The unworn ritual of eternal things.

CHANCE

By Christabel Lowndes Yates

HE stepped down the gangway briskly, whistling as he went, jumped some detached planks from the pile of Swedish timber they were unloading, and strode away toward the little drawbridge that led to the town.

Across the narrow strip of harbor water there were the lights of the water-side shops and taverns, queer-smelling, dark little places, with a strange flavor all their own: places that huddled close to the water's edge, with only a cobbled, cargo-strewn roadway between them and the ships, then the narrow strip of harbor water, then more ships—timber ships, grain ships and a score of others which were unloading by the wharf.

It was this he was tramping on now, a cobbled, deserted strip lined with ware-houses that led toward the town. The queer shapes of cranes towered above him, black and silent now, but alive in the daytime, moving, grasping, releasing and giving tongue all the time to strange creaking cries.

It was a place full of romance, the romance and glamour that is inseparable from the sea, but it was empty and arid compared to the romance and glamour of the boy himself. Four days ago, when at sunrise they had slipped out of Götte-börg harbor in the pale, translucent dawn of the North, he had stared at the innumerable islands of the bay, beautiful and desolate as they lay asleep on the water, and he had thought that he would tell her about them. Then he laughed at himself, because when he was with her he never wanted to talk about anything. He wanted to look at her, to dream about kissing her, to revel in her presence, and

to be quite quiet and still so long as she was near and he could touch her. That was all he wanted now when he was with her. Time was when he had talked by the hour of his country, of his home by the lake, of the great sleeping forests of Sweden and of the little farm that had been all his world till he had gone to sea. But now it was different; his passion for her had overmastered him, and he could only sit rapt and idolatrous and shy.

Walking quickly, he had left the wharf now, and turned into the quiet dark streets. Over the roofs to the west a reddish glare of coarse light flung on the sky showed where the marketplace was. Above his head as he went toward it rose the tower of an old church, black, dark and foursquare against the glowing sky. In the silence of its atmosphere you could catch the hum of distant crowds, and now and again, infinitesimally faint, the scream of a woman's voice, and, intermittently, the blare of vulgar music.

He went straight toward it, then stopped in a dark little street—a narrow street of cottages, some of the better sort, some the home of the humble poor. Nearly all the houses were dark; here and there an oil lamp showed dimly, or there was the flicker of a fire, but for the most part they were black rows of silent houses that seemed to be watching him. The street lamps were only points of light that served to accentuate the surrounding blackness. But at the end of the street was a riot of color and sound. Tunnel-like it led blackly to a roaring whirlpool of light and noise, where the street gave on to the marketplace. There was a fair there—the pleasure fair of the year; and all the world of the little

harbor town was at play. The sound of it was tremendous: the grinding noise of brazen tunes blaring away one against the other, the shouts of the showmen, the smell of naphtha and oranges and hot humanity, the noise of the crowd, the shouting, the laughter, the cries of tired children. It all came to him faintly, like something small and pitiful and immensely distant—something as the sounds of earth might float up to the ear of a listening God.

It seemed to him gropingly—though he could never have put it into words—that all this sort of thing was the complex and artificial effort of people to find happiness who had not got love. Whereas he had it, he was alive with it, it ran and tingled in his veins as the very essence of his life.

And outside he was just an ordinary young fellow well set up, with an open, pleasant, impulsive face, wide blue eyes that perhaps dreamed too much to see life quite truly, attired in the laborious best of a seafaring man who is young and romantic and so splendidly in love that you know he is in the first grip of that fever which is the essence of life itself.

He did not go straight up to her door. Time had been when he would have run up to her door and opened it unheralded, thrusting his head in with a saucy greeting; but all that was before he knew he loved her. Now he paced up and down, glutting himself with the delight of being near her, fingering all the while a bit of gold Swedish jewelry he had brought for her. He had bought it long ago, but somehow when the moment came he had been afraid to offer it. A sudden paralyzing shyness had overtaken him. He had fumbled the little parcel in his pocket, never withdrawing it, and grown red and awkward and silent and very shamefaced, till finally she had tossed her head, rallied him, grown angry at his silence and run away.

They had been close to her home when she left him, and she ran in and banged the street door loudly behind her. After a moment of stupefied amazement he followed, hammering violently on the door, till the old mother opened it and found him fiercely demanding his Florrie.

"Oh, no, she isn't angry, bless yer," the old woman said. "It's just all of a piece with 'er ways, that's all. She's like that, Florrie is. Oh, yes, I'll tell her; don't you worry."

That was all he got, and he had to be content with it. She would not see him again that night, and the next morning at dawn his boat had sailed. He went heavy-heartedly till the magic of the sea had laid hold of him, and the song of the wind in the spars and humming ropes had healed him and brought him back to her again, sane and passionate and whole.

Now as he paced up and down the narrow, dark little street, he had forgotten all that, and he thought only of the girl herself: of the lure of her dark eyes, of her full white face, young and wonderful and haughty. He remembered the way her eyes shone when she talked, and glowed sullenly when she was angry because he did not amuse her. His imagination conjured her up in the darkness with a vividness that was beyond all bearing. He dashed quickly across the road and knocked loudly at No. 13.

There was no answer to his imperative summons—not the first time, nor the second, nor at all. She had known he was coming, too—was expecting him. His crashing knocks on the door brought out a neighbor, a dirty, laconic soul, who pointed a finger toward the whirlpool that eddied and roared at the end of the street, and murmured that they were at the fair.

The boy turned and followed the direction of the pointing finger. As he got nearer, the sounds and the cries and the raucous voices increased in volume till it seemed scarcely possible to bear the din. Showmen shouted, merry-go-rounds brayed, tired children cried, women scolded, and laughed and the crowd chattered. Everything was moving, shifting, kaleidoscopic.

A girl passing said something to him, drawn by the lure of his youth and charm. He gave a rapid flash of his blue eyes in her direction, but she was empty of all fascination since she was not his Florrie. He stood staring by the

merry-go-rounds, knowing he would find her, staring at the passers-by, seeking her face among the crowd of strangers. He did not feel alone because he knew definitely that he would find her—he felt that this was his night. He could wait all the more patiently because he knew just how her black eyes would light up when she saw him. He was so sure that the waiting did not matter.

Some of the booths he entered in his search; near the open ones he stood and watched the crowd. Outside one a girl in a dirty tinsel dress swung herself in a sort of dance. The crowd clustered thickly about her, country people for the most part, thick-set, homely souls from the villages near, to whom the fair was life itself. The noise of their talk eddied round him—the full, strangely modulated voices of the rustics. It reminded him of the roar and crash and fury of a storm at sea. But the violence of the sea sound kept touch with eternity—this confused clamor never reached it. It was a babel—a chaotic mass of shattered individual passions and forces. Among this streaming, shifting world of sound and humanity, the boy threaded his way about, seeking and staring and aloof.

As he came round to the entrance again, his certainty faded and he became frightened. She was in there, he knew, but he could not find her. It seemed as though the shifting, noisy world had come between them. He felt—foolishly—as if he could find her if only the noise would stop: the blaring out of those terrible brazen tunes, the shriek of the booth owners, the crack and rattle of the shooting galleries, above all the senseless parrot screaming of the people that hemmed him in. In the silence he knew he could find her.

It grew noisier. Somebody threw confetti, and the little pieces of colored paper stuck all over him. He brushed it off with a movement of sick disgust. In a moment the place grew rowdy. Handfuls of it were thrust almost in his face and the stuff clung to him. It seemed as if he would never be free from it. His disgust rose. His mind, clean with the memory of innumerable dawns, of the

poetry and dreams which the sea fosters in the dreamer—revolted from the coarse orange glare of the naphtha flares, and the noisy give and take of the rough crowd. He grew a thousand times more anxious to find her—to take her away from this riot down to some cool dark street that led perhaps to the water. It was, though he did not know it, the eternal, impractical dream of the lover to withdraw his love from life and to be with her eternally, alone and unharassed. Though he could not find her, his love pursued her so closely that he did not feel alone.

Then he saw her. She was quite close to him. In his haste to get away from the contamination of the confetti he had drawn back under cover of one of the great merry-go-rounds. Some movement of the crowd made him turn, and it was then he saw her. She was leaning back in a car on one of the great machines, tightly clasping a youth. One of her arms was flung across him, and the motion of the car had flung them together so that her cheek was pressed against his shoulder. Her hat by the contact was pushed awry, but her big dark eyes and her full, beautiful, pale face glowed with the exaltation of a tremendous happiness. Their free hands were clasped.

The huge machine had just started, and they were swept by him, up and down with the switchback movement of the track. The music of it brayed loudly. He stood still, paralyzed—amazed—incredulous. His mind refused to believe it—rejected the possibility as too fantastically cruel. But his flesh acknowledged it. His pulses checked themselves; his brain reeled. The immense jangling, glittering thing swung round, banging and droning and clattering. A child laughed delightedly; a woman screamed. It was still going slowly, though not so slowly as it had been. She was there again, and she had not changed her position or very little, and again she did not see him. It seemed extraordinary that—that she should not even see him.

To him, the world round him, the crowd, the huge nerve-shattering volume of sound, had all melted away into a

black, dizzy atmosphere where they were alone—just the two of them.

The man who was collecting the pence stopped at the car where she was and held out his hand for the fare, and the youth who held her shifted himself to reach a coin out of his trousers pocket. But even then she didn't move really. If anything, she crept a little closer to her partner. The pace of the huge machine whirled her away from his sight. He caught at something to steady himself. His world was staggering. The swift rush of the car that held the ruin of his passion grew. It leapt at the incline and whirled forward to bring her toward him again. As they came near him for the third time she screamed with excitement and flung herself nearer to the strange youth. They were perhaps friends of a night, and both exhilarated with the swiftness of the motion, and the watching boy and his agony were far outside their world.

He saw that and it maddened him. Then, without knowing that his instincts had mastered him, he sprang at the swiftly moving machine, hit something, fell, was whirled giddily a yard or two, and in a second an attendant had flung him off.

He staggered up, his face cut a little, and stared amazedly at the crowd. He had not even reached her. Somehow he had miscalculated the pace of the machine, and the car that contained her had been whirled away before he ever reached it. The crowd round him increased and he stood in the thick of it, dazed. Words had deserted him, and he passed his hand over his rough hair and muttered something unintelligible. The people round him stared, and a policeman broke through, clutched him roughly by the shoulder and pushed him toward the exit. Bells were jangling as he passed, machines were starting and stopping, people pushing, but he was not conscious of them, scarcely conscious even of the tremendous thrusting force of the policeman's hand on his shoulder that impelled him toward the gates. People stared as he passed—at the blood on his cheek, at the stunned agony of his drawn young face—then closed up

after him, laughing a little louder because life instinctively protects itself from even the thought of tragedy.

At the entrance the thrusting hand was withdrawn from his shoulder and he was pushed out into the street—the dark little street of his tragedy. For a moment it seemed black and foggy like the unlit blackness of his mind. He stood still reeling, and gripped at the iron railing near him, trying to remember what had happened. He put his hand up to his bleeding cheek, but though his fingers were wet he did not understand. Two or three children, belated, stared, and a dog smelt at him. A cart rattled slowly by.

Perhaps it was that that suggested movement to his mind. Automatically he went forward, slowly at first, then with a dogged and bitter resolution. He passed the little house of his tragedy without even knowing it, going as a dog goes, by sense of direction alone, turning unconsciously, as a wounded creature will turn in unbearable pain, to solitude.

Instinct took him to the sea. It was black dark as he plunged off the little asphalt parade on to the shingle—dark with a wild gray moon peering fitfully through thick curtains of cloud. His heavy steps crashed on the shingle, and it seemed to his disordered imagination as if the very stones screamed. He trudged on, away from the town lights, longing only for darkness. The lamps on the little parade grew fewer, dimmer, and then ceased. Still he went on, seeking peace and silence, though for him at that moment the world did not contain it.

He stumbled along slowly over the stones, falling once or twice and rising again with the same dogged determination. The sound of the sea and the peace of the silence and darkness calmed him a little. His passion of unbearable pain had stilled; he was numb—dead. There was something merciful in him that could suffer no more. A sort of stillness settled over his mind—the remote stillness perhaps that precedes death: the sort of peace that comes after unbearable pain when the mind realizes that life with its capacity for suffering is

practically over, and that there is only the peace and stillness of death to come; and that life—even life the terrible—can hold no more pain.

A steamer passed, brilliantly lit and close in; the throb of her engines caught his ear and he stared at her. It was an excursion steamer returning late from a long trip. She passed him slowly on her way to draw up at the pier, a golden, starry mass that glided by, scarcely stirring the black, oily water.

He caught his breath sobbingly. Six weeks ago they had been on her together—he and his Florrie. He crouched down abruptly on the stones as though to check thought with action. The tide was coming in, and the little waves broke over him with a tender, crooning sound.

He fumbled at the laces of his shoes and took them off—the old immortal custom of the Swede who enters his home—laid them neatly together as he had always done since he could toddle in the porch of his old home, and then slipped into the sea.

The shore shelved gradually away from the land, and he had gone some little distance before the water was above his knees. He was still in a sort of dream—a subconscious condition that was barely alive. No thought of the finality of death stirred him; he accepted it as a tired child slips into the lap of sleep. He went very slowly now, with much the action of a sleepwalker, his hands spread out in front of him. He was not afraid—yet.

He waded on—balancing himself with outspread hands—dully amazed that it took so long for the water to reach up to his head. His outspread fingers touched something—a floating mass of jetsam, and with the instinctive desire of the seaman for the treasure of the sea, he grasped it. The mere chance touch of it told him it was something strange, and with the sensation of touch, some

faint aroma of life came back to him. He clutched at the mass with both hands, and as he stood there in the wash of the sea, gripping the unknown thing, the whole terror and fever of life came back to him. He was in very deep water now, with the immensity of night and the sea all round him, and the faint, huge terrors of death seemed close and inevitable.

The thick bank of clouds parted for a moment and the gray ghost of the moon shone through. He looked down then and saw the grim thing he was clutching, and between his hands the gray terrible face of a dead seaman. The hands were entangled in seaweed, mute witnesses of the grim and bitter struggle for life that had failed.

Instinctively the boy recoiled, and with the release of his hands the poor dead thing moved a little in the wash of the sea. The revulsion was tremendous. Death was there close to him in the water. It was a real, vital, horrible thing, not a shadowy elysium of escape. He shuddered as the horror of it broke over him.

Turning, he stared out over his shoulder to where the lights of the town were visible. Life! Life! The girl had gone completely—not the faintest thought of her remained. The close touch with horror had obliterated everything, and he had come to grips with the facts of life—life the inexorable from which there is no escape till the gods are ready.

Far to the left, unseen round the headland, were the ships, and his among them; and close by them there was the harbor town, and sounds of men and homely things. The movement of the incoming tide washed the body against him, and a tiny wave, breaking higher, kissed his neck. He stepped back shivering, drawing the dead seaman after him, laid it high and dry on the shore and ran back toward the town.



COMEDY—when he deceives her; tragedy—when she deceives him.

FELLOW TRAVELERS

By Achmed Abdullah

FOUR men took ship across the sea, quaint fellows whom the wind had blown together from the uttermost ends of the earth. One was bald-headed; another had thick curly locks: one was brown-complexioned, another the color of old ivory: one was dressed in rags, another in flowing white robes.

From the ends of the earth they came, but they were all traveling toward the same goal.

They were thirsting for talk. But none being willing to commence and thus, perhaps by an incautious remark, hurt the others' feelings, they remained silent.

But in the morning when, red and gold and purple, the young day rose, and in the evening when, tired and sad, the old day closed his eyes, the four fell on their knees and prayed to the living God who had breathed life into their bodies of clay. The monk counted the beads on his great wooden rosary; the dervish lifted the palms of his hands toward Allah's tent and repeated the ninety-nine holy names of the Incomparable; the Brahman made elaborate prostrations in deepest silence, and the Buddhist bonze kissed the yellow dust.

And one night the dervish broke the heavy silence and said:

"To whom do you pray?"

"To God," answered the monk.

"To God," answered the Brahman.

"To God," answered the bonze.

And as brothers they gripped hands in silence. For they were pious men and they prayed to the same God.

The new moon had risen and swung in the skies like a ball of silver.

"God walks over the waters," said the dervish, with dignity. "In his turban shimmers the white moon."

"You are wrong," irritably replied the monk. "Turban indeed! No, no; the good God wears a halo of gold—and decidedly not a turban."

"You are both wrong," cried the Brahman. "God wears a garland of lotus flowers—lotus flowers, pale and holy and odorous—and a thousand times more beautiful than your foolish halo."

"May God curse your foul and lying souls!" shrieked the bonze. "You are all wrong, the four of you. He wears a cue, our God—a nice, thick, glossy, black cue—and from his cue there hang little silver bells—and they sing little silvery songs—"

But already the monk's heavy fist had smitten him between the eyes.



THE Truly Advanced are beginning to revise the Bible, starting, of course, with *Eugenesis* and *Sexodus*.

THE AMERICAN: HIS IDEAS OF BEAUTY

By H. L. Mencken

OF all the *beaux arts*, whether graphic, symbolic or tonal, the American has his doubts and suspicions, holding them to be enervating and effeminate, and their practitioners no better than they should be.

For example, the notion that a grown man, sound in wind and with hair on his chest, should make a living playing the piano is to him a horror and an abomination. Such tricks are for milksops and scoundrels. Even that fellow who dallies with the keys for the mere fun of it, and without open claim to applause and reward, is one who pursues perilously a corrupting vice. Not, of course, that this amateur is without his saving justifications, his occasional uses. There are moments, God wot, when even the malest male is moved to sing, when "Old Uncle Ned" springs irresistibly from the sternest larynx, when music is not only lawful but almost laudable, and at such moments it is convenient to have an accompanist at hand, a performer tried and true, one familiar with the traditional airs and not apt to pass the hat. But the American, let it be remembered, ventures into brothels only on rare and careless nights, and so his need for such an accompanist is but slight, and his attendant toleration but transient. Taking one day with another, he clings faithfully to his theory that piano playing is a saccharine and unmanly pastime, fit only for women and machines, and to be abandoned even by a woman, if she would be thought wholly decent, after her first child.

For fiddlers, strangely enough, he has rather more respect, but only in propor-

tion as they are genuine fiddlers and not violinists. That is to say, he esteems the fellow who can perform bouncingly a jig or reel, but views biliously the fellow who runs to sonatas and concertos. This bile is in part made up of a dislike of sonatas and concertos as such, on the ground that they are cacophonous and incomprehensible, and in part of a deep-seated distrust of all professional artists. The American, in brief, agrees thoroughly with George Bernard Shaw in the doctrine that artists and vagabonds are of the selfsame stock. The essential thing about both, as he sees them, is that they are unwilling to earn a living in a respectable and useful way. The hobo on the blind baggage is simply a farm hand who is too lazy to go on milking cows, or a city apprentice who has succumbed to dime novels and cigarettes; and the professional musician, by the same token, is simply a loafer who has grafted upon his reluctant father during an over-prolonged youth, and now maintains himself in idleness by inflaming the concupiscence of women who ought to be better occupied at home, darning socks and beating their children.

It is always easy to convince the American that any given artist is a debauchee and a rogue. He believes faithfully, for example, that all painters live in adultery with their models, that the great majority of poets are drunkards, that all dramatists of any pretensions are pornographers, that opera singers, male and female, are almost unanimously immoral, that all actors are polygamists, and that practically every actress, high or low, has her price. In

many parts of the United States, indeed, the word "actress" is a common synonym for "prostitute," as the phrase "chorus girl" is in all parts. And when, a few years ago, one of the leading woman's magazines made the discovery that certain fair members of the Metropolitan Opera Company were honest wives and mothers, the mere statement of the fact, repeated in various accents of astonishment, was sufficient material for half a dozen articles.

No artist, purely as such, has ever evoked any manifestation of general respect in the United States. True enough, there have been temporary rages for such persons as Paderewski, Sarah Bernhardt and Jenny Lind, but in every such case it has been skillful press-agenting, appealing frankly to a childish weakness for the marvelous, that has primarily inflamed the vulgar. Paderewski won by his hair, his high pay and his general aspect of romance, and not at all by his indubitable skill at a difficult craft. Sarah Bernhardt conquered by elevating the art of acting to the level of bear-baiting, not only by her fantastic methods of advertising, but more especially by her choice of sensational plays. And as for Jenny Lind, she was exploited by P. T. Barnum in exactly the same deliberate, unconscionable way that he exploited Jumbo and Tom Thumb, and her own share in her success lay as much in her ostentatious alms-giving and her lack of artistic conscience as in her genuine magic of voice. Better artists, in all that separates the artist from the mere artisan, have come to the United States and failed, at least in the popular sense. I need only refer, among piano players, to Von Bülow, Rosenthal and Busoni; and, among actresses, to Duse and Agnes Sorma; and among singers, to Sembrich. Every one of these, of course, aroused a certain enthusiasm among the discriminating few, and now and then a faint echo of it got into the newspapers, but they never attained to the public celebrity of Paderewski, Bernhardt and Lind, nor to anything remotely approaching it. The one apparent exception to the rule is Enrico Caruso, but even in his case it is his ability to bellow

a staggering high C that makes him famous, and not his more worthy (and far more difficult) feats of *bel canto*. In brief, he is venerated as a freak before he is appreciated as an artist, and no doubt a good part of his renown is due to his exploits and misadventures outside the opera house.

On turning from purely interpretive art to creative art, one finds a still lower development of intelligent appreciation. The United States, despite a poll parrot opinion to the contrary, has produced more than one great artist and many lesser ones of respectable capacity, and some of the latter have been intensely national in feeling, but there is no record of any spontaneous recognition of such a lord of dreams. That electric mixture of pride, patriotism and intelligent admiration which brought Norway to the feet of Ibsen and Björnson, and turned the fiftieth birthday of Joseph Victor von Scheffel into a German national holiday, and made all Poland mourn the too-early death of Stanislaw Wyspianski, and forced a glorious forgiveness from the Swedes for August Strindberg, and gave Tennyson an English barony, and raised Frédéric Mistral in Southern France to the place that Pushkin had in Russia and Burns in Scotland—such a universal acclaim of an imaginative artist is unheard of in this republic, and well-nigh unimaginable. While Poe lived, not one American in fifty was aware of his existence, and since his death it is chiefly in foreign lands that his fame has grown. The Americans of today buy his books from the book agents and even read them and enjoy them, but there is certainly not apparent any pressing sense of his greatness, any widespread pride in his daring and his achievement. In the city of Baltimore, where he won his first recognition, did his best work, came to his melodramatic death and now lies buried, it has been found impossible, after forty years of effort, to raise the ten thousand dollars needed to give him a decent monument. Baltimore, during that time, has opened thirty new parks and two hundred new streets, but not one of them bears the poet's name. During the

same time the city has spent more than three hundred thousand dollars upon monuments and memorials to fourth-rate soldiers and petty politicians, but until recently the very grave of Poe was hidden behind the dirty wall of a frowzy churchyard, and a private enthusiast had to furnish the few dollars necessary to cut a gate in that wall.

So with all the rest of our great makers and dreamers. If, now and then, one of them has attained to something approaching popular celebrity, it has always been in some capacity sharply differentiated from the purely artistic. Emerson, I dare say, was the most famous of the New England brahmans—he came closest, that is, to a truly national renown—but Emerson, it must be plain, was always far more the soothsayer than the artist, and it was precisely his banal soothsaying, and not his mild art, that made him a hero. In brief, he was the father of the New Thought of today, that typically American balderdash. Mrs. Stowe, in the same way, was a rabble-rouser and not an artist: there is little more esthetic merit in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" than in the average college yell. The *prima donna* preachers, lyceum stars and other such rhetoricians of the ante-bellum period go the same route: if there was any artistic merit in their whoopings, it was no more than the smoke accompanying the more important discharge of shells, and their glory did not grow out of it. When we come to a genuine artist, Walt Whitman, to wit, we come to a man who made no more impression upon his countrymen, taken in the mass, than a third-rate pugilist. If they thought of him at all, during his seventy-three years of life among them, it was chiefly, if not wholly, as a wholesaler of the obscene. He never appealed to them as a great poet, as an eloquent and impassioned prophet of their democracy, but merely as a man who took long chances with the postal laws. When, in reward for "Leaves of Grass," he was deprived of his modest place in the Interior Department and denounced donkeyishly by some forgotten Tartuffe, public sentiment approved both the

dismissal and the denunciation. Even today, by one of fate's little ironies, all appreciation of Whitman is confined to a narrow circle of admirers, most of whom are professed immoralists. That average American in whom he believed so resolutely, and whose thirsts and struggles he celebrated so feelingly, is no more moved by him than by Johann Sebastian Bach.

Comes now an exception—Mark Twain. But is he really an exception? I doubt it. It is a fact, I grant you freely, that he tasted the sweets of popular adulation in his later years, that he died a famous and honored man, that his celebrity was not only intense in degree but also widespread in extent—but was it, at bottom, the celebrity of a literary artist? Was it comparable, in other words, to the celebrity of Ibsen, or to that of Swinburne, or yet to that of Tolstoi? I am convinced that it was not. Mark Twain's countrymen, even today, have no true comprehension of his rank and dignity as an artist. They think of him, when they think of him at all, as a sort of super-clever clown, as the blood brother of Artemas Ward, Bill Nye and Chauncey M. Depew. They connect him, not with such magnificent pieces of imaginative work as "A Connecticut Yankee" and "Joan of Arc," nor even with the penetrating, highly sophisticated humor of "Captain Stormfield" and "Huckleberry Finn," but with the artificial hoaxes and buffooneries of his days and nights of idleness. It is the after-dinner jester, the extravagant lecturer, the wearer of white clothes that lingers in their memory, and not the incomparable literary artist. Of all the things he wrote, the one that made the greatest initial success and is oftenest referred to by his countrymen today is "The Jumping Frog," a mere anecdote, borrowed in its substance and but little dignified in the telling. Whatever appreciation of Mark the artist is now visible in the United States is an appreciation confined to a remarkably small number of persons. In Europe, and especially in England and Germany, he was earlier recognized and better understood: in his own country even pro-

fessional critics got no genuine sense of his towering stature, of his kinship with Cervantes, Swift and Molière, until he was safely in his grave. The obituaries were the first accounts of him that did the half of justice to him, and here, no doubt, it was American sentimentality, a great deal more than intelligent understanding, that set the tune.

So the list might be prolonged, but we must pass on from artists to art itself. On the way, it is sufficient to call attention to the long neglect of American singers, to the enforced exile of American painters, and to the public indifference to such national bards as Key and Randall. America has been producing first-rate operatic singers, particularly sopranos and basses, for a generation, and since the early nineties they have swarmed in the opera houses of Europe, but it is still well-nigh impossible for one of them to succeed at home without first gaining approval abroad. A few striking exceptions merely prove the rule. No spontaneous appreciation of merit exists among us; the thing the American understands and applauds is not really singing at all, but notoriety. When it comes to painting not even notoriety attracts him. The two most famous English speaking painters of our time have been Whistler and Sargent, both of them Americans, and yet there is not the slightest sign of national pride in their achievements, and to the majority of Americans their very names are unknown. So are the names of Childe Hassam, John W. Alexander, Winslow Homer and Gutzon Borglum.

In the case of the patriotic poets, the authors of our national anthems, there has been rather more appreciation, but little more reward. Every schoolboy knows that Key wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner," but it was not until nearly a century after its composition that anyone thought to raise a monument to him, and even then the business had to be proposed and carried through by his descendants: our cities are full of memorials to undistinguished soldiers and forgotten politicians, but the one man who imbedded the high resolves and great daring of the War of 1812 in so-

norous and electric stanzas has been neglected alike by government and by people. As for Randall, I remember well the pathos of his last days. The South, while still bawling his clarion call to arms, had forgotten its author, and so he came to Maryland in search of stronger memories. He was an old man and poor, and he frankly desired a pat on the back, a round of applause. But Maryland, My Maryland was too busy to heed him. A few woman's clubs offered him tea, as they might have offered it to a passing French lecturer or matinee idol; a survivor or two of the old regime invited him to dinner; the newspapers mentioned him a bit tolerantly, apologizing for the fervor of his youth. He died, in the end, almost unnoticed. Maryland was engrossed by peanut politics; the South was trying to forget the War.

But all of this, of course, may be dismissed as no proof of the American's indifference to artistic expression; he may disdain the artist, and yet hold the art itself in high respect. Æsop's fables delighted the Greeks, but Æsop himself, if we hear aright, remained a slave to the end of his days. "Hamlet" has been a first favorite among English tragedies since the afternoon of its first performance, but it took the English people so long to pay honors to the author that they found him, when the time came at last, already half a myth. I doubt, however, that any such common weakness of humanity may be pleaded in confession and avoidance of the American's apathy to artists. The truth is that his apathy to art is no less intense and unshakable. It is apparently impossible for him to think of beauty as a thing in itself. Even when he appears to be moved by a purely esthetic impulse, it is nearly always easy to show some other and less civilized impulse lurking in the background.

For example, his interest in the marvelously varied and beautiful scenery of his country is almost entirely a childish delight in mere bigness and singularity. He is impressed by Niagara chiefly because no other country in Christendom has so large a waterfall. He glories in

Yellowstone Park because it is a sort of natural circus, an incredible geological debauch. He goes to the Grand Cañon of the Colorado and to Pike's Peak and to the redwood groves of California because these things are unparalleled and astounding, and not at all because they are beautiful. The one river that appeals to his imagination is the Mississippi, which is as deficient in attractive scenery as the average sewage disposal plant, but enchants his imagination by its mere hugeness. For Nature in her gentler, more normal, less prodigal moods he seems to have no feeling whatever. He is no wanderer in the woods, as the German is: he prefers a city park, with its paved ways and hideous flower beds, to the open country, and the intolerable garishness of a so-called summer park to either. The wide spaces of his Western prairies have never awakened the poetry in him, as the *steppe* has awakened the poetry of the Russian, and the *pusta* that of the Bohemian. Among all the lowly songs that make up his folk music, there is no single song of spring, nor one that celebrates the singing of birds, nor one that hymns the mountains, nor one that brings back to him the balsam and silence of the woods. His sentimentality often takes melodious form: he has many songs of home, of mother, of young love. But he has no "Goldene Abend Sonne" and no "Im Wald und auf der Heide" and no "Winter, Adieu!"

And if he is thus almost anesthetic to the beauties of nature, he is even less responsive to those beauties which spring from the hand of man. So long as art stands bravely on its own legs, disdaining the support of mere lavishness and bombast on the one hand and of morality and sentimentality on the other hand, he will have none of it. Thus he shows little interest in music until it becomes noisy and spectacular. The Germans, the Welsh and the Bohemians brought choral singing with them when they immigrated, and wherever they have settled they have founded large and excellent male and mixed choruses and give frequent concerts on a large scale, but the native American has re-

mained entirely uninfluenced by this example. It is seldom, indeed, that his ear is acute enough for him to sing in tune, and almost unheard of for him to read music. Like the savage, however, he has a sharp sense of rhythm—so sharp, indeed, that he gets delight out of rhythmic eccentricities which affect the more cultivated hearer disagreeably. Hence his liking for the elaborate measures of ragtime and his equal liking for the thunderous step of band music. There is scarcely a county town in the United States that lacks its "silver cornet band," and not a large city that does not offer a ceaseless bray of brass in summer; but in the entire country there is not a single first-rate orchestra supported wholly by the public. Good orchestras exist, true enough—perhaps a dozen of them in all, or one to each 7,500,000 of population—but they are maintained by a very small class of rich amateurs, and their members are practically all foreigners. To so-called "light" music—*i. e.*, to jingles combined with dancing and clowning—the American is very hospitable, but that is chiefly for the sake of the auxiliary attractions. It was a dance that made him rave over "The Merry Widow" and a dance that charmed him in "Florodora." But for serious opera he has only scorn, and his view of so elemental a music drama as "Lohengrin" remains that of the Weimar audience which yawned over it in 1850.

Here in music, of course, it must be noted and allowed in fairness that public taste, whatever its present crudity, is still measurably less crude than it used to be. The influence of the big orchestras and opera companies, true enough, is not felt directly by the common people. Such organizations are maintained by a very small number of rich men, and the persons who patronize them belong chiefly to that pushing, half-educated class which supports drama leagues, goes into raptures over each new fashionable philosopher and is hotly eager for every other such means to intellectual distinction. Add the social climbers pure and simple, hospitable to caterwauling because it is

heard in dress clothes, and the small class of professional musicians and intelligent amateurs, and you have the typical American opera audience. The common people are not in it: its gallery, in so far as it has one, is made up almost entirely of foreigners. But if there is thus no direct inoculation of the American democrat and freeman with the hideous *cocci* of counterpoint and recitative, he is at least hospitable to an occasional small dose at second hand. That is to say, his appetite for marvels is aroused by newspaper tales of opera house prodigies, deficits and amorous intrigues, and so he is led to make a compromise with his prejudices. He still holds to his doctrine that grand opera is all bosh, and he is still reluctant to sit through it, even when the price is reduced; but he is curious to hear Caruso earn a thousand dollars at one miraculous laryngeal blast, and so his phonograph records begin to be sprinkled with high C's and he scrapes a far-away, unintelligent acquaintance with "Celeste Aida," the "Pagliacci" prologue and the quartette in "Rigoletto."

The Italian bands have helped in this modest progress, perhaps even more than the phonograph. When they first appeared in the summer parks, at the dawn of the new century, the union men of the native bands were immersed in the Rosey and Sousa marches, and it was only on national holidays that they ever tackled things so "hard" as the Pilgrims' Chorus from "Tannhäuser" and the "Light Cavalry" overture. The Italians, more brave and fluent, introduced the "Il Trovatore" tower duet for cornet and trombone, and the "Rigoletto" quartette for four loud trumpets, and the "Lucia" sextette for the whole brass choir, and so the American began to acquire a tolerance for such mildly "classical" stuff, and even to demand it. But he has not gone into it very deeply. A band with sound wind could play his whole repertoire in an hour, and he would probably be begging for "My Old Kentucky Home" at the three-quarters.

Meanwhile, an indubitably American school of music has sprung up, as distinctive in its markings as the Spanish

school or the Magyar or the Irish. There are pundits who deny this with great fuming and sophistry, just as there are pundits who deny that the jubilee songs were genuinely niggerish, but the fact remains that specimens of this American music are instantly recognized abroad, and that no other country produces it in any quantity. Its dominant characteristic I have already mentioned: it exalts mere rhythm to an importance elsewhere unattained in civilized music. No melodic invention is necessary to write this primitive stuff. So small are its demands in that direction, indeed, that its most eminent professors borrow shamelessly, from Methodist hymns and comic opera tunes on the one hand and from such things as Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" and the "Pagliacci" prologue on the other. Nor does it admit any emotional content: it cannot be made to express love or courage or hope or even simple reverie. Its one function is to set the knees and ankles to jerking. It is music bound by the closest of ties to the tom-tom rataplan of the savage. It belongs in the sub-cellar of the tonal art, along with the endless chants of the Bedouins, the inept and ludicrous dance music of the Chinese and the monotonic tunes made by children with their rattles. Compare it to the average Hungarian *czardas* or German *volkslied* or Polish *mazurka*, or even to the average Scotch pipe air or darkey "spiritual," and you will at once perceive its hollowness and nakedness.

In all the other arts that he presumes to dally with the American shows a like preference for elementals. His first demand of all of them is that they shall make no demands themselves, that they shall not burden him with any sense of their significance and value. And his second and last demand, whenever he goes beyond the first, is that they shall subordinate themselves, even in their lightest moods, to utility. The fruit of this attitude is visible in the household utensils and ornaments of the typical American home. They are not only unspeakably hideous, but also meaningless. You will not find in them any of that subtle symbolism which gives dignity to

the peasant art of most other countries, and to the still lowlier art of savages. A Navajo blanket *means* something: it not only keeps out the cold, but also stands for a tradition of the past and an interpretation of the present. And so with the wood carvings of the Swiss mountaineers, the jewelry of the Tyrol *bauern*, the gaudy *ikons* of the Russian *muzhiks*, the peasant laces of Ireland, the pottery of a hundred races and tribes. These things not only meet the daily needs of the folk who make and use them, but they also, in a very real sense, voice the aspiration of those folk. A vision is in them. It may be a very humble one, but still it is a vision. In the stage properties of the American's life drama, however, there is no such esoteric element. He is surrounded by things made in factories, sordidly, without inspiration and at wholesale. In the design of his furniture the main object of the craftsman is to get as many chair legs as possible out of a hundred feet of wood. His carpets and wall-papers are deliriums of ugliness, with no meaning or intent save that of overwhelming the dazzled eye. His common ornaments are mere brummagem, dishonest imitations of antagonistic and puerile models—"bronzes" made of plaster, ormolus stamped by steam, "cut" glass full of mold marks. His beautiful native woods, by the time they reach his home, have been ridiculously disguised as mahogany or Flemish oak. The pictures on his walls, when they are not grisly caricatures of his dead relatives, are sentimental abominations of the "Playing Grandpa" school or shoddy reproductions of idiotic water colors.

No, I am not forgetting the arts and crafts movement, nor the appearance of Rookwood pottery, nor the invention of so-called mission furniture, that one purely American contribution to domestic art. But it must be obvious that these outreachings toward a greater decency in environment have usually ended in extravagance and absurdity, and that when they have escaped that peril they have made but little impression upon the American people. Not

one American in a thousand has ever heard of Rookwood pottery, and not one in five thousand is taken with chills in the presence of a Brussels carpet. And not one in ten thousand, I dare say, could be made to see any offense against the eye and the midriff in putting mission furniture into a ten by twelve room. The home of the average American, as homes go in this inhospitable world, is richly furnished. That is to say, its contents represent a considerable expenditure—perhaps the equivalent, taking one with another, of a full year's income. But the effect of all this somewhat lavish outlay is never one of unity, of fitness, of character. That simple dignity which you will find in a German peasant house, and in an English cottage, and even in a remote Swiss chalet is wholly missing. Wall swears at floor, floor swears at furniture, and all three swear at the house itself. There is no feeling for beauty of arrangement, no effort at self-expression, no striving to make decoration a factor in the art of life. We have, in brief, no peasant art, no people's art, spontaneous, native and racy of the soil, as every other race in Christendom has, and nine-tenths of those in the heathenlands without.

But it is in architecture, perhaps, more than in any lesser art, that this national lack makes itself most manifest. Twice we have made wholesale architectural thefts from other people—and quickly reduced the loot to hideousness. The first time was during the early years of the young republic—the so-called "Colonial period"—when we borrowed various beautiful Georgian details from the English and essayed to combine them with details borrowed from the Greeks upon our soap box houses. The second time was just after the Civil War, when we got the mansard roof from France, added towers and jigsaw scrollwork, and achieved the most appalling architectural monstrosities in history. Each time the piracy failed to leave any impress of permanent value—and the same failure has pursued the more ambitious and delirious piracies of later years. There is scarcely an American city of one hundred thousand inhab-

itants that cannot show examples of every architectural style known to the handbooks, and yet no distinctively American style has arisen, and the average American home—the true test of national architecture—remains as ugly and as undistinguished as a Zulu kraal. In its essence, it is simply a square box. And from that archetype it proceeds upward, not through degrees of beauty, but through degrees of hideousness. The more it is plastered with ornament, the more vulgar and forbidding it becomes. The more it is adorned with color, the more that color becomes a madness, a debauch, a public indecency. Take a train ride through any American State and you will be sickened by the chaotic ugliness of the flitting villages—houses sprawling and shapeless, green shutters upon lemon yellow churches, a huge advertising sign upon every flat wall, an intolerable effect of carelessness, ignorance, squalor, bad taste and downright viciousness. But make the same sort of journey through France or Germany—say from Bremen to Munich or from Paris to Lyons—or through Austria or Italy or Switzerland, and you will be charmed by the beautiful harmony visible on all sides, the subordination of details to general effects, the instinctive feeling for color, the sound grouping, the constant presence of a tradition and a style. The design of the peasant houses changes twenty times between the Westphalian plain and the foothills of the Alps, but in every change there is a subtle reflection of the physical environment, and an unmistakable expression of human aspiration, worldly estate and character. I don't know any ugly village between Bremen and Munich, nor even a village without its distinction, its special beauty, its individual charm. But I don't know of a village between Washington and Chicago that is not frankly appalling.

So goes space, and the profound business of accounting for all this remains untackled and undone. I have argued with great fuming and fury that the American is a foe to the beautiful, but I have not proceeded to the where-

fore and the why. Well, let the grim labors and laparotomies of the inquiry go over to some other day. All I desire to do here is to throw out a suggestion, to wit, that the blame rests upon that lingering Puritanism of which I discoursed in July—a Puritanism which still poisons and characterizes the American, for all his latter-day dallying with the fleshpots. How strongly this Puritan tide yet runs in his veins you will begin to understand when you have read Mr. Maurice Low's "The American People," a painstaking and searching book, too little studied in this fair land. The one thing to recall now is the undying opposition between the Puritan view of life and what may be called, in deference to current critical slang, the pagan view of life. The moving impulse of the Puritan is always moral: he cannot imagine anything that is neither right nor wrong. And naturally enough, his repertoire of things that are wrong tends to maintain a marked fatness, and to suck into it most things that are fleshly. And so regarding the world, suspiciously, sourly, biliously, he has no liking for life's eases and usufructs. The thing that is not indubitably moral must be necessarily *immoral*. There is no halfway house. There can be no honorable compromise between ethics and esthetics. The true and the beautiful are unthinkable save as symptoms and complications of the good.

Such is the Puritan. Such, I believe, is the American. He steers clear of beauty because he is afraid of beauty, because it is the author of all his own flings and backslidings. Music is the devil's whisper. The Medicean Venus has bare legs, and is hence no company for a family man. The books that so-called critics recommend are apt to deal with adultery. Paris, the home of art, is also the home of unspeakable levities. Pantheons go with *helaira*: cathedrals of Cologne with Rhine wine; colosseums with carnality. Poets drink; painters forget No. 7; composers swap wives; actors are polygamists. The American sniffs and pricks up his ears. Art is long—and licentious.

THE END OF A DREAM*

By Gabriele D'Annunzio

IN the peace of the warm June mid-day Donna Laura Albonico was meditating under the cool arbor.

Amidst a clump of green trees, the grayish country house, with all its blinds drawn, was a-slumber. The fragrance of orange and lime trees in bloom blended itself with the scent rising from the rose bushes.

Donna Laura was advanced in years. She had a delicate, aristocratic profile, a long and faintly arched nose; her forehead was a little wide perhaps, but her mouth was perfectly chiseled, fresh yet and with an expression of infinite kindness. Her hair was all white and weighted her head like a crown. In her younger years she must have been very beautiful and very lovable.

She had not been more than two days in this lonely villa with her husband and the household. She had forsaken for this season her usual summer residence, the ancestral manor atop a Piedmontese crag.

One day she had said to her husband: "Let us spend the summer in Penti."

The septuagenarian Baron had been greatly disturbed by this unexpected whim.

"Penti? Spend the summer in Penti? And why on earth should anyone go to Penti?"

"Oh, please, let us go to Penti this summer, just for a change."

And the Baron gave in, as he always did.

Behind Donna Laura's insistence there was a secret motive.

At the age of eighteen she had married Baron Albonico for one simple reason: the match was eminently suitable to

both families. The Baron, however, one of Napoleon's bravest warriors, spent most of his time a long way from home, trailing in the wake of the imperial eagles. During a protracted campaign, it happened that the Marquis of Fontanella, a young aristocrat with a wife of his own, conceived an ardent passion for the Baroness; handsome and daring as he was, he did not fail to win her favors.

One day Donna Laura knew that she would become a mother. Upon the advice of the Marquis she left for France and kept herself in hiding in a little village of Provence, surrounded by sunny, fertile fields and where women folk spoke the dialect of the troubadours.

When the solemn hour drew near, the Marquis, awaited rather impatiently, came to her. Pale and sparing of speech, he covered with kisses the hands of his beloved.

Some time in the night she was delivered of a son. The first cry of the newly born filled her with blissful wonderment. Blanched of face, voiceless, with barely enough strength to keep her lids from closing, she made with her wan, bloodless hands vague, ineffectual gestures such as the dying sometimes make as though to grasp the light.

The next day she had the child with her, in her own bed, under her coverlet. It was a frail, tiny thing, limp, reddish, in which life was visibly pulsating but in which the human shape was only dimly outlined. Its eyes, bulging slightly, were closed yet, and from its mouth there only issued a weak plaint, a sort of half-smothered miauling. She never tired in this supreme happiness to look

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at it, to touch it, to feel its breath on her cheek.

A golden light poured through the window which opened on the crop-laden plains of Provence. A worshipful mood pervaded the days. From the wheat-fields alternated song rose into the peaceful atmosphere.

And then they took her baby away from her and hid it God knows where. She never saw it again.

She returned to her husband's house and lived with him the life all women live. No other passion ever thrilled her heart. She never bore another child.

The idealized, the worshipful memory of the little creature she had lost, whose whereabouts she did not even surmise, took possession of her mind with an insistence that would not be gainsaid. At times the faces, living, sharply outlined, of men and women she had known there in Provence would seemingly cross her field of vision. She heard incessantly the feeble moan of the tiny being; she fancied she could touch its hands, so tiny, so pink, so delicate, the only part of its body which seemed distinctly shaped after a human model.

In this inner world of thought which gradually assumed a more and more definite semblance of reality, she immured herself like a recluse; she spent year after year in it and age came upon her.

A thousand times she had besought her former lover to tell her where their child was. Lest she commit some imprudence, he had ever denied her entreaties:

"No, you must not see him. You would not be able to control yourself; he might try to exploit your secret, or he might merely betray it. No, you must not see him."

Donna Laura had never come to realize that the tiny mite must have grown, must have become a man drawing now toward middle age. Forty years had elapsed since her child had been born; to her he was still the wee, pinkish baby with eyes that were not yet open.

When Donna Laura heard that the Marquis of Pontanella was near his death, she lived hours of inexpressible

anguish. At last, unable to withstand the torture any longer, she went to his house. An obsessing idea impelled her to go: before the man died she must learn the secret of her son's whereabouts.

It was at the end of the afternoon; the roofs were turning violet purple, and drinking songs were heard in the workmen's cafés.

She asked for the Marquise. The Marquise, a stoutish woman with hair turning gray, came; choked by sobs, unable to utter a word, she opened her arms to the visitor.

Avoiding her glance, Donna Laura asked after a little while:

"May I see him?"

And she clenched her jaw to keep her teeth from shaking.

"Come with me," the Marquise answered.

In the sickroom the light was subdued and an odor of drugs floated on the air. The various objects threw weird shadows on the floor and on the walls. The Marquis of Pontanella was stretched motionless on the bed. His pallid face was deeply furrowed. He greeted Donna Laura with a faint smile.

"Thank you for coming," he said slowly.

And he extended to her his hand, feverish and moist. He seemed by an effort of his will power to regain possession of his mental faculties. He spoke of various things, selecting his words carefully, as when he was in good health.

Donna Laura, however, was staring at him with such a burning entreaty in her eyes that he finally turned to his wife:

"Won't you go and prepare me my potion, dear?"

The Marquise, without any suspicion, excused herself and left the room. In the silence of the house the rustle of her gown on the carpet became fainter and fainter.

With an irresistible impulse Donna Laura bent over the aged man and grasped his hand, and the insistent question in her glance wrested word after word from him. His pupils dilated by terror, the dying man muttered:

"In Penti . . . Luca Marino . . . he has a wife and children . . . no, no, don't see him. . . . In Penti . . . Marino. . . . Don't ever let him know . . . who you are."

The Marquise returned with the potion.

Donna Laura managed to control herself. She sat down. The sick man drank; each swallow of the liquid passing through his throat produced a soft, gurgling sound. Then there was silence. The sick man relapsed into a comatose stupor; deep shadows seemed to fill the depressions of his face, the cavernous eyes, the hollowed cheeks, the nostrils, the emaciated neck.

II

UNDER the bower, in the peaceful garden, Donna Laura was thinking of all those things. Gusts of soft air were bending the rose bushes, which nodded drowsily; through the greenery, water spouts rose and glistened like the blades of swords.

For a few minutes Donna Laura listened. The silence was so weirdly deep that it made her shudder. She rose, cast a glance at the villa, then hurried down the path. At the gate, masked by creepers in bloom, she turned once more and then walked into the open. Under the noonday sun the fields spread out endlessly as glaring as a sand desert.

In the distance, the houses of Penti shone white against the azure sky. A steeple, a cupola, two pine trees rose above their roofs. The silvery gleam of the river meandered through the plain.

Donna Laura was thinking: "He is over there." Every fiber of her mother's heart was thrilled. She walked, with her glance fastened on the distant village, in spite of the sun which seared her eyelids, unmindful of the oppressive heat. Where the road passed between rows of stunted poplars all ringing with the singsong of the crickets, she met two barefoot women with hampers on their heads.

"Can you direct me to Luca Marino's house?" she asked.

It had given her joy to speak his name aloud.

The women stopped and looked at her with surprise.

"We are not acquainted in Penti."

Disappointed, Donna Laura kept on her way. Her aged limbs were beginning to yield to weariness. Before her eyes, dazzled by the pitiless sun, crimson spots were rushing through space. She was conscious of a slight dizziness.

Penti was drawing nearer. Through a clump of trees she could descry the first tile roofs. She reached the first house. An abnormally fat woman was seated before the door; her enormous body was supporting a childish face, with kind eyes, good teeth, a pleasant smile. With naïve curiosity she asked Donna Laura:

"Where do you wish to go, lady?"

Donna Laura took a step toward her. Her face was aglow and her breath almost failed her.

The woman hospitably invited her to come in and rest a while. On the floor of the house, which reeked of huddled mankind, several children with bloated abdomens were playing and rolling about, putting into their mouths everything they laid their hands on.

Donna Laura asked:

"Do you know where Luca Marino lives?"

The woman pointed to a house with the walls stained pink at the end of the village, close to the river, and surrounded by a colonnade of tall poplars.

"That's the one. Do you want to go there?"

Donna Laura stared at the house with eyes that hurt, choked by a surge of maternal feeling. There was her son's house.

The woman asked:

"Do you want to cross the river?"

Donna Laura made a vague gesture; her retina seemed to be a fountain head from which flowed a stream of whirling red spots.

The woman kept up her talk:

"Marino takes people, teams and cattle across the river. He has a boat and

a ferry. Else one would have to go all the way to Prezzi to find a ford. No danger with him. He has been on the job so long."

Donna Laura was listening intently; what she heard about her son left her as in a daze; she didn't understand the words clearly.

The woman, yielding to her garrulous propensities, kept on:

"Luca Marino does not come from this village. The Marinos brought him up because they had no children. A gentleman who is from other parts made a settlement on him when he got married. Luca is well off now. He is a hard worker, but he shouldn't drink so much."

Donna Laura rose to go.

"Thank you, my good woman, and good-bye."

After giving one of the children a piece of silver, she went out again into the sunlight.

"Follow the path," the woman called out to her.

From the seared and dusty soil rose short, gnarled olive trees. The stubborn sing-song of the crickets filled the air. Donna Laura reached a group of houses clustered around a sort of open shed. In the shadow of this structure seven or eight beggars had gathered and were sleeping. Over their heavy, bestial faces, over their deformed limbs, swarms of flies were buzzing as over a heap of refuse.

The sound of Donna Laura's steps woke up one of the beggars, who mumbled perfunctorily:

"Won't you help a poor man?"

All the others rose at once, and the tattered group followed the woman with outstretched hands: one had lost a leg and hopped along like a wounded monkey; one crawled along on his hands like a grasshopper; one had a monstrous goitre that bobbed up and down at every step. Another had a withered arm twisted like the root of a tree.

Donna Laura felt a terrified desire to run, to escape the pursuit of that pack of monsters. She would have cried if sounds could have come out of her throat. She fumbled in her skirt for

some coins and threw them on the roadway, where the monsters fought savagely for them, cursing and kicking one another. One epileptic idiot who was always the butt of their jokes could not get anything, and stood there weeping, licking off the tears that rolled down to the corners of his mouth and uttering a grotesque wail:

"Ah . . . Ah . . . huh . . . Ah . . . Ah . . . Huh . . ."

III

DONNA LAURA finally reached the house of the poplars. She was utterly exhausted. Her sight was clouded; her blood was hammering at her temples; her tongue was parched; she was barely able to stand up.

The turnstile was open; she entered the huge farmyard encircled by tall poplars. Agricultural implements were scattered right and left; puppies were barking at the cows or chasing the hens.

An old man, bald and bent, came out of the house.

"What do you wish, lady? Do you wish to go across?"

He motioned to the river.

"Yes, yes," Donna Laura answered, not knowing what to say or what to do.

"Come along then, lady; here is Luca now on his way home," he added, walking toward the stream, where a ferry loaded with sheep was being pushed across with long poles.

He led her through a vegetable garden to a little roofed shelter where other people were waiting. The old peasant praised the condition of the fields and forecasted a good crop.

As Donna Laura remained silent, he turned to look at her and noticed tears in her eyes. In the same quiet voice he asked:

"Aren't you feeling well?"

Donna Laura, whose heart was breaking, answered:

"No, no—it's nothing."

The old man did not insist. Life had hardened him, and other people's sorrows left him unmoved.

"Sit down," he said.

Three young farmers with heavy loads were waiting, puffing earnestly at their heavy pipes as though afraid of missing any of the pleasure smoking afforded. Now and then they passed those insignificant remarks which mirror the slow and limited mind of the tiller of the fields.

One of them announced phlegmatically:

"Here comes the ferry."

Another said:

"Those are Bidena's sheep."

Said the third:

"There must be fifteen at least."

Then they rose and put their pipes away in their pockets.

The ferry bumped against the landing. The frightened sheep bleated; the ferryman and his son pulled them ashore.

Luca, having made the ferry fast, took a few steps up the path. He was tall, lean, sunburnt, his hair sparse at the temples. His mustache was of an indefinite shade; tufts of hair grew unevenly on his chin and on his cheeks; his eyes were dull and bloodshot—a drunkard's eyes; his nose was bulbous and purplish. His shirt, open at the chest, revealed a crop of coarse hair; on his head he wore a greasy tam-o'-shanter.

He stopped before the shelter, breathing hard, his feet wide apart, wiping with his hand the perspiration from his forehead. He passed without looking at anyone. In all his gestures, in all his attitudes, there was something uncouth and brutal. On his enormous hands, heavy from handling oars, blue veins bulged.

"Phew—I have a thirst!"

Donna Laura stood there, will-less, unable to think. That man was her son. That man was her son!

A pregnant woman disfigured by repeated motherhood brought him a jar of wine. The thirsty man emptied it at one gulp, wiped his lips with the back of his hand and clacked his tongue. Then, with a grouchy expression, as though the work cloyed him, he grunted:

"All right; let's go."

With the help of his son, a strapping lad of fifteen, he held two pieces of board

over the edge of the landing and the rim of the boat.

"Aren't you going aboard, lady?" the old farmer asked.

Donna Laura rose and let him help her on board the ferry. Why was she going aboard? Why was she crossing the river? She wasn't even asking herself those questions. She was no longer thinking of anything. Her mind was obsessed by one single fact: that man was her son. She felt something dwindle gradually and vanish within her; she felt a great void in her brain. Things, sounds she only perceived as though in a dream. Luca's son came to collect her fare. She didn't hear him. Thinking that the old lady was deaf, the lad raised his voice and jangled in his hand some coins he had collected. She gave him something. The boy explained that he had no change. She made a gesture of indifference; he pocketed the coin with a knowing grimace. The men smiled with that shrewd look peasants have when they witness a deed of trickery.

The oarsmen, bare to the belt, were battling with the swift current. Donna Laura saw in front of her Luca's swarthy back, his ribs protruding under the skin and little rills of perspiration running along his spine.

She sat there, staring, her pupils dilated, with an uncomprehending expression.

One of the passengers pulled his bundle from under a seat and said:

"Here we are!"

Luca threw the anchor on the shore. The boat floated down stream to the end of the rope and then stopped short with a jar. The farmers jumped ashore and helped the old lady to land. Then they went on their ways.

This side of the river was covered with vineyards. The winebushes, short and slender, ran in long green rows. Here and there the round crown of a tree relieved the monotony of the flat plain.

On this unshaded shore, Donna Laura felt lone, lost, unconscious of anything but the ceaseless pulse in her arteries and a terrific din in her ears. Every-

thing, even her own life, had become dim, distant, dead, forgotten. She kept tottering along with motions at once tragic and preposterous.

On the other shore the beggars were taunting the idiot who hadn't received any alms to swim across the river and ask her for money. They tore his rags from his back and pushed him into the water. The idiot was paddling along like a dog under a rain of pebbles which prevented him from swimming back. The hideous band was hooting, howling, reveling in this cruel prank. As the current was carrying the idiot down stream, the beggars were hopping along the shore gesticulating and calling:

"He is sinking! He is sinking!"

After desperate exertions, the idiot clambered up the bank, and oblivious of his nakedness, for all sense of shame had long since been obliterated in his degenerate brain, he sped toward the woman with his oblique gait, his hand outstretched.

In a recoil of terror the poor woman ran toward the river. Did she know what she was doing? Did she wish to die? Was she thinking at all at that minute?

She reached the extreme edge of the bank and fell. The water closed over her, bubbled up, became smooth again; then a thousand concentric circles spread out from the spot where she had

fallen, in luminous and glittering wavelets.

On the other shore the beggars hailed a boatman who was rowing away in the distance. "Hey, Luca! Hey, Luca Marino!" And they ran to the house of the poplars to tell of the accident.

Luca rowed to the spot they pointed out to him, talking to his son the while.

"Father," the boy asked, "have you tasted Chiachiu's new wine yet?" And he made a gesture which testified amply to the quality of the beverage.

"Not yet," Luca answered.

"Well, Angelo said he'd like you to have a taste of it."

"All right," Luca answered.

They reached the place. The idiot, who might have directed them, had fled into the vineyard, and was writhing in an epileptic fit.

"You take the oars," Luca said to the boy. "I'll poke around with the hook."

After searching the bottom of the river for an hour, Luca finally muttered:

"I've got her!"

He bent down, planting his feet wide apart, and began to lift slowly something heavy caught on the end of his boat pole. His muscles were shaking under the strain.

"Want any help?" the boy asked, pulling in his oars.

Luca answered:

"I can manage it."



FOODS THAT REMIND US:

ASPARAGUS.....	of a Christian Scientist.
CAULIFLOWER	of a male suffragist.
JELLY.....	of a surgeon.
OATMEAL	of a good woman.
OYSTER COCKTAIL.....	of the other sort.
TOAST.....	of a scientist.
DILL PICKLE.....	of Niobe.

THE SEAL OF CONFESSION*

By Arthur Scott Craven and J. D. Beresford

LEST a desire to make this story public should have outweighed my better judgment, let me state here that I recently sought the formal sanction of the one personage still living who might conceivably counsel a further tenure of silence, receiving in return—and from a properly authorized source—the following characteristically gracious answer:

Il n'y a plus de raisons maintenant pour remettre la publication de l'histoire. C'était un des traits du caractère de mon ami de vouloir imposer silence à ce sujet. Je me permettrais seulement de suggérer que vous pourriez substituer d'autres noms à celui du bon révolutionnaire, ainsi qu'à celui de mon ami.

Je pense que c'est le désir du brave général lui-même.

My old friend must, therefore, appear disguised under the name of "General Jules Despard," and "Simon Lebrun" will serve as well as any other name for the real Simon. With this necessary preliminary, I will release both names from the indignity of inverted commas forthwith.

I can still see the General quite clearly in my mind's eye.

He must have been very old. As a young lieutenant of cavalry, he had fought with distinction at Quatre Bras and Waterloo.

Three years earlier, in the May of 1812, he had witnessed the triumphal departure of the first Napoleon from Paris at the apex of his power and greatness. He had seen him a few days after his return from Moscow in the winter of the same year, sullen, combative, unyielding. He had followed him at the time of his dramatic entry into Paris with Ney after Elba, three months before Waterloo had brought the great Master

Puppet of Destiny his final overthrow; and, finally, just a quarter of a century later, he had followed the poor shell of the physical man to the Hôtel des Invalides—as potent as the dust of Cæsar or Alexander now to rouse the curious reveries of contemporary Hamlets.

General Despard was the ideal veteran, tall, handsome, erect, white-haired, implacable. He detested republicanism, even in its mildest guise.

He was the militant Imperialist *cap-à-pie*, and the very name of Napoleon would act upon him as a stimulus. Time was when he was bracketed with Pélissier, some three years his senior, and MacMahon some ten years his junior, as one of those men about whom it may be safe to prophesy—even in France. That a marshal's baton would be the ultimate symbol of a life's work was never more confidently predicted of any man.

He was appointed a general of brigade in 1848, and six years later, in the Crimean campaign of 1854-'55, assisted at the storming of the Malakhoff.

Pélissier has left on record his high appreciation of General Despard's brilliant military services, and his astonishment when Despard in 1856 accepted an appointment (never clearly specified or gazetted) in the Préfecture of Police is skillfully conveyed by the Marshal's historic message to Despard on the day that the appointment was first announced to an amazed Paris:

"Je me réjouis, non sans un sentiment de douleur, à l'enlèvement de mon plus grand rival."

Later it was known that General Despard had accepted the appointment in obedience to the earnest solicitation of Napoleon III himself.

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Though the appointment he filled in the Préfecture was vague and its range of duties never officially defined, it was understood that the General was to be given discretionary powers of the most comprehensive kind, though in no way encroaching on the ordinary functions appertaining to the duties of the Préfet of Paris: and no question exists but that the General took the fullest possible advantage of the singular position he occupied.

He never carried a weapon. He disdained and forbade any form of protection, and it was his habit to wander through the streets of Paris at all hours, unfollowed and unattended.

He treated threats and warnings with a laughing indifference—though he was commonly, and probably rightly, regarded as the most threatened man in Europe in his day—and he even evinced a warm friendship for Simon Lebrun himself, brother of the more famous Anatole.

He and Simon had fought in the Morea together, an indissoluble link to the old General.

That Anatole Lebrun's daring plan to assassinate the Emperor in 1867 was frustrated by a timely betrayal of the scheme by a member of the innermost ring of the secret revolutionary party is no longer a debated point, and even at that time small doubt existed but that General Despard himself had issued specific orders for Anatole Lebrun to be shot down by the National Guard on the first outbreak of the Paris riots.

But resentment against the General paled into insignificance when weighed against the vindictive fury felt toward this hidden Judas in the revolutionary camp, and when Simon Lebrun succeeded his brother Anatole as president of the secret revolutionary party, the discovery of the traitor at any cost became his paramount dream and object. The larger issue was, as it were, temporarily suspended.

That General Despard enjoyed the fullest confidence of the Emperor was apparent to everyone; and his devotion to the small son of the Emperor, the gallant and ill-fated Prince Louis Napoleon,

Prince Imperial of France, was a fact almost equally notorious.

Among the General's many papers, none has a more curious significance than the *dossier* of the man whom we will call "Jean Jacques." (Here, also, a certain reticence is required of us, for "Jacques" was the father of three children, two of whom still survive, a daughter unmarried, and a son who in his turn has three descendants.)

The *dossier* is in the usual form, but our research has failed to discover any duplicate in the Paris archives, and we are bound to conclude from this and other evidence that the leaves which now lie before us are those of the original official copy which was subsequently abstracted from the records by the General himself.

The physical description of "Jean Jacques," in this document, meticulously detailed as it is, cannot be presented, but from it and from the General's notes we may picture the character of the man. Undoubtedly he had the temperament, if not the power of expression, of the poet. In the notes of various secret interviews with the General we find Jacques sometimes ecstatic, full of enthusiasm ("*bouillant*" is a word which Despard constantly uses); at other times he appears morose and taciturn. Without question the man was at war with himself, tormented by the problem of life, and more especially by the continual urge of some strange ethical spirit within him. He seems, indeed, to have suffered from what we may call a double conscience.

On the one hand he was constrained by a sincere and fervid loyalty to his fellow conspirators. He was naturally of a careless and generous disposition, apt to give without considering the cost to himself, but willing to pay almost any price demanded of him: characteristics which are often found associated with, or are possibly prompted by, a true feeling for fellowship. On the other hand—and it is here that we catch some glimpse of spiritual duality—his actions were continually influenced by a powerful ethical motive which, when it manifested itself, ruled him to the exclusion of all

else. In a sense this motive was religious, despite his profession of *esprit fort*, and the marks of it are found in his horror of taking life in any shape. Let it be understood, however, that this distaste was, to a certain extent at least, subconscious. In theory Jacques was a whole-hearted revolutionist, willing to wade through the blood of all Imperialists in order to set up the ideal republic. But when faced with the actual commission of the deed, his whole being shrank from any form of cruelty.

Such men are perforce casuists. They dare not avow the truth even to their own souls. How often, one wonders, had Jacques persuaded himself that his betrayal was no more than a far-seeing and subtle policy; that he was averting disaster because the time was not ripe; that his treachery was no less than a stroke of genius carried out independently to save the plans of his society from premature action?

Despard's police organization, magnificent as it was, was proving insufficient. We mark the signs of political intrigue, of the clear recognition of a powerful enemy who must be fought with his own weapons. And the chief sign of this change was the traffic with unofficial spies, foremost among whom was the poet Jean Jacques.

Jacques, himself, would have resented the imputation which our description lays upon him. That is a fact which must be evident from our knowledge of the man. What sophistries he used to persuade himself of the rectitude of his treachery do not concern us, but we must do him the justice to believe that he did so deceive himself, and that he was incapable of realizing the aspect his conduct wore in the eyes of the man who used him as his instrument.

II

No rumor of the abduction ever reached the public world of Paris. If the *coup* had been planned with elaborate care, it is improbable that it could have been carried out with such perfect secrecy. The effectiveness, the supreme unostentation of the affair were due to

the fact that it was so entirely unpremeditated.

In every detail can be traced the finger of fate, the coordination of the movement of life to a single purpose. The miraculously empty street, the crawling *fiacre* driven by a man who was a member of the "society," the passing of the Prince Imperial with his tutor at the precise moment when Simon Lebrun and his two companions emerged from the by-street, are all evidence of that sudden correlation of chances which occurs now and again in the history of a nation or in the life of an individual.

Such coincidences do not in themselves turn the attention to the thought of some great coordinating intelligence intent on the little actions of men. We accept them as the expression of mathematical chance, which at long intervals turns up the strange combination, the extraordinary sequence that every gambler expects to find once at least in a lifetime.

In the case of this abduction of the Prince Imperial, however, we seem to perceive the working of some external agency. To the extraordinary synchronization of the various factors we have noted must be added another element of even greater significance, namely, the inspiration which came to Simon Lebrun.

He was not a genius. He owed his leadership of the society to qualities which had no relation to intellectual versatility, to ready adaptation, to brilliance of conception. On the other hand—and the antithesis is, indeed, a very marked one—he led this particular group of revolutionaries because he was a man of single mind, dogged rather than fanatic, ruthless, unchangeable, guided by a fixity of purpose which no obstacle could defeat.

Yet it was to this stubborn, unemotional mind that the inspiration came, an inspiration so compelling and vivid that for a few seconds his will was mastered by an external force: he acted at the dictates of a higher intelligence. "Divert that man," were the instant instructions that came to Simon's mouth.

His two companions, uninspired, hesitated.

"Call for help. Make him follow you. Then lose him and join me at the meeting place," said Simon imperatively, and his agitation and his gestures served the primary purpose of attracting the attention of the Prince's tutor.

The two men caught the reflection of their leader's inspiration. With one accord they shouted suddenly for help, and beckoning, turned back into the street from which they had just emerged.

"What is it?" asked the tutor, startled by this enormous intrusion into the placidity of everyday existence.

"What is it?" he repeated, and took half a dozen steps down the side street.

"Oh, help, quickly—for God's sake, help!" called the two, leading him on, beckoning.

Still he hesitated. He was tied by the knowledge of his imperative duty. He stood looking into the gloom of the side street, and for the third time he asked: "What is it? What's the matter?"

Then, with a frown of impatience, he turned back toward the wide clearness of the avenue down which he had been walking, and saw that the Prince Imperial had disappeared.

The lull in the traffic had passed. Paris, for one minute miraculously asleep, was awake again, moving gaily in the declining brightness of the fine April evening. Carriages and foot passengers had wonderfully sprung to life after that moment of suspense. And in the distance the tutor saw a *fiacre*, that was being driven furiously, a *fiacre* which, even as he cried out in fear and horror, turned down a side street and disappeared.

The tutor wasted no time in futile chase. Instantly the whole meaning of the plot was clear to him. He hailed a passing cab and instructed the driver to take him to the offices of General Despard. So fierce were his instructions, so desperate his insistence on the necessity for speed, that the driver galloped his horse the whole distance.

But Paris moved on unsuspecting. None had been attracted by the little

tragedy which had been played. The secret of that night's calamity was confined to those who were cast for the plot by the hand of fate. . . .

But it had been impossible to keep the news from the Tuileries, and there two great figures in French history were compelled to show brave faces to their brilliantly moving world while their hearts were torn with a grief and anxiety greater than either of them had ever known; though one at least of them had lived through bitterness and hardship such as few emperors have been called upon to experience. . . .

Despard drew himself up stiffly when he heard the news, but he gave no other sign of the depth of the very real emotion which must have stirred within him. His feeling for the boy who had been abducted was more than that of a father for his son. To Despard, the young Prince Imperial represented the Empire; much as he loved the boy for his own sake, he loved perhaps still more his ideal of the Napoleonic tradition. One thing only he valued higher than this: his own personal honor.

Not until the complicated, delicate machinery of his secret police organization had been set in motion did Despard turn his attention to the tutor, prostrate now with fear and misery.

"We have been too careless," said the General. "When we have found His Imperial Highness, he must never again be allowed to walk in the streets of Paris without a guard."

The tutor caught eagerly at the hope expressed. "You think he will be found?" he asked.

"Without question," returned the General.

The *coup* had been made a few minutes before six, and for three hours after no news came to the office in which the General sat rigidly awaiting the reports of his staff. Each return announced the failure to discover any clue. The *fiacre* had not been identified. No one had seen anything which gave the smallest hint of any disturbance. There was no evidence whereby the identity of the abductors could be verified. The tutor's description, indeed, was absurdly vague,

and he could only swear to having seen two men. The presence of at least one other was merely inferred from the fact of the Prince's disappearance.

Then, a little before nine o'clock, word was brought to the General that M. Jacques wished to see him. For an instant Despard hesitated; he did not connect this visit with the disappearance of the Prince, and it was an afterthought that prompted him to grant an interview. It had occurred to him that the man might prove of service in the great hunt that was being prosecuted in every quarter of Paris.

Jean Jacques was manifestly in a state of considerable agitation.

"I have had your word," he broke out, as soon as he and the General were alone. "Such services as I have given you have been given on your pledge that my identity shall always be concealed. It was more than a promise—it was your parole."

"I have not broken it," replied the General. "Nor shall I."

"You cannot," said Jean Jacques. "That was the bond between us. No oath could be more binding."

The General waved him aside. "I have given you my word of honor," he said. "I know of no more sacred oath. Now I wish to speak—"

"Ah! That!" interrupted Jacques. He sat down wearily and looked keenly at the old man. "Ah! That!" he repeated. "Yes, I know. I have come to tell you where the boy is."

Despard sat more stiffly than ever. "He is safe?" he asked.

"Safe! Oh, yes. He is safe, but not I," returned Jacques.

The iron self-control of the General nearly forsook him at this careless admission. "But it is imperative—" he began, and then altered his tone. "You must give me the full particulars," he said.

"I have come to fetch you," replied Jacques. "In a little quarter of an hour you shall meet him face to face. That is easy. But listen. It is Simon who has abducted him. It was done on the spur of the moment—an inspiration, as he says. That is nothing. But his plot is

everything. He will give up the Prince, yes, but he asks a return. He will make a bargain with you. He demands, in exchange for the safety of this boy, that you shall disclose the name of that one who has been false to the society."

For a full minute there was silence in the room. The two men looked steadily at each other, each trying to weigh the other's soul. At last the General spoke.

"Do they suspect you?" he asked.

"They would as soon suspect Simon," was the answer.

"If we take a guard—"

"You will find the boy dead, and you will have broken your word to me."

"You could give me the address and return. You could say that I could not accompany you."

"That is part of my message I have not delivered," replied Jacques. "If you do not return with me, the boy dies. Simon has said it. He does not respect life; he respects nothing. He is harder than fate, more cruel than the devil. If he knew that it is I who, for his own good, have given you certain information, he would kill me as he would kill an insect, though I were his dearest friend, though I were his own brother. He has no heart. He cannot love nor hate. He is as immovable as God."

"I will return with you," said Despard.

"And you will not betray me?"

"I have given you my word."

"Although the life of this Prince depend upon you?"

"Although the future of France depend upon me. I have faith in a greater than Simon Lebrun, M. Jacques."

"I have greater faith in your word," replied the poet, with a sneer. . . .

The General and his guide walked in silence until they had crossed the Pont Notre Dame, and then Jacques said suddenly: "How do you know that this is not a trap? I, at least, have good reasons for wishing your death. Oh, the finest, possible reasons. Why do you take my word so easily?"

He paused, and then, as the General made no reply, Jacques continued:

"How well it works out! I have news of the Prince's disappearance. It gives

me an idea. I come to you and lead you, without inquiry, among those who have every wish to be rid of you. You are never seen again, and I have many chances of escape. It is easy, isn't it?"

The General nodded. "It is easy," he said. "Nevertheless I accompany you."

"You believe my word—the story I told in your office?"

"Yes, I believe it," returned the General. "But in any case I should come with you, now."

"Ah! You have no fear of death?"

"No. The sight of it is too familiar to me." Despard spoke carelessly.

"God, but you are a stupid man!" broke out Jacques. "No, you do not fear death; you have not the imagination. And you will walk into a trap, foolishly, blindly, without a thought that your life may be necessary to those you serve."

"There are many others who can carry on my work," replied Despard. "My life is necessary to no one."

Jacques shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, well," he said, "it is well for me that you fear dishonor, at least; even the dishonor of a broken promise, a word that you have given to me. Is it not so?"

"It is well for you, certainly," returned Despard.

"And now," said Jacques, "we approach the meeting place. My General must forgive me if I take one last precaution and blindfold you."

Despard stopped without a word and allowed Jacques to bind a scarf across his eyes.

"Now, blind man, I will lead you," said the poet. "And still you have no fear?"

The General did not deign to reply. He was considering, he tells us, some means of escape for the Prince Imperial, and he saw none. Without doubt he was determined to die rather than leave the "meeting place" alone.

Jacques's description of Despard as a "stupid man" was undeserved. The General knew the character of Simon, and saw clearly enough that all depended on the interview before him. The per-

son of the Prince was valueless to the society save as an equivalent in the bargain which had been proposed. If that failed, Simon would kill the Prince and dispose of his body. The boy's death would be an advantage now in the revolutionary game; the possession of him alive, would be nothing more than a source of danger.

"We arrive," announced Jacques, breaking in upon the General's meditation.

The room in which Despard's eyes were uncovered was in no way different from a thousand other cellars which might have been found in the south-east of Paris. It was lit by a single gas jet which every now and again leaped into a tall flame with a long hiss. A rough but apparently strong-framed door communicated with another room; possibly to a long range of cellars, which might reach the bank of the Seine; almost certainly to some other egress.

Jacques banged to the door behind them, and at the sound of it four men, Simon Lebrun among them, came in from the further room. But it was Jacques who answered the General's eyes.

"Here is your General Despard," said Jacques with a laugh. "The bait was a good one, Simon. He has come without question, to make a bargain. He comes to give you one life in exchange for another."

"Good," said Simon, who was a man of few words. He leaned against the edge of the table and looked steadfastly at the General. "Well," he said, "the name of the traitor who has sold us."

"Gently, my friend, gently," returned Despard. "I have not yet seen your hostage. In so serious an affair we must be frank with each other."

Simon, grunting an acquiescence, made a movement with his head in the direction of the further room, and one of the three men went out, closing the door behind him.

"Oh! But yes, we must produce our evidence," laughed Jacques, who seemed now to be in the most boisterous humor. "Bring in the witness to Simon's one flash of genius. It is well that Simon

should have full credit. Tell us again the story of the inspiration, Simon, the great poem of your life."

"I leave such trash to you," muttered Simon.

"Oh! But trash, my brave Simon?" laughed Jacques. "Has not literature ever influenced France to action? Has not the poet always led the revolutionist? And now, when for one inspired moment you have combined the two—You are too modest, Simon. It is a fault in you."

Simon made no attempt to reply, but turned his shoulder to Jacques, and stared at the door behind him.

"Hurry, then, Michel," he shouted.

One of the other two men, who had both been silent till now, leaned forward and whispered something that Despard could not catch, but the tone of the speaker and Simon's nod of assent left the impression that the Prince might have to be fetched from some place outside the range of cellars.

A silence fell, broken only by the occasional flare and hiss of the gas jet. Simon appeared plunged in thought; Jacques was moodily biting his thumb.

Then came the sound of movement and voices from the further room; the communicating door was flung open and the little Prince Imperial stood, hesitating, on the threshold.

"Forward, then," said the man addressed as Michel, and gently pushing the boy before him, he closed the heavy door, which swung to with a deep clang.

Even at eleven years old, the little Prince Imperial sometimes wore a look of resignation, as if he acceded to the training or the high duties in which he was being instructed with the foreknowledge that he would never be called upon to perform them. And on this night it seemed that he was already prepared for the last decree of fate. He did not shrink from the rough figures about him, but neither did he face them with the forced courage of a boy ashamed to be afraid. Rather, he seemed to disregard them, to be looking forward into a future which he alone could foresee. For a few moments he did not see the figure of the General,

standing stiff and upright in a corner by the further door; and then he took a step forward.

"General Despard!" he said, and his tone conveyed surprise rather than any other emotion.

The General had stood at the salute from the moment of the boy's entrance, but now he dropped his hand.

"My Prince," he replied.

"You have come to fetch me?" asked the young Napoleon.

"That I cannot say, as yet," returned the General.

"Oh, surely," broke in Jacques quickly. "We have presented our hostage; the rest is a mere formality. Give us now the name of the traitor who has betrayed us, and with certain precautions, such as a temporary blindfolding, we are prepared to escort you both to safety. Eh, Simon?"

"It has been agreed," returned Simon curtly.

"But what guarantee have I?" asked the General. He was seeking merely to postpone the issue. For half an hour he had been thinking desperately, trying to find some solution to the terrible problem, and as yet no solution had come to him.

"Our word is guarantee enough," growled Simon.

"Guarantee!" laughed Jacques. "What guarantee did you ask when I brought you here? Is there need for so much more precaution before you leave?"

"Hurry, then," said Simon. "We want the name."

"And if I refuse to give it?" asked the General.

Simon produced a pistol from the pocket of his jacket and pointed it at the head of the young Prince.

The boy did not flinch, but the General's head went back still another shade.

"Well?" said Simon carelessly.

Jacques had turned his back. The General had not once looked at him since they entered the underground room, but now he was conscious that the poet was trembling.

"I am in an immensely difficult position," said the General. "The man whose name you wish to learn gave me

his information under seal. I have given him my word of honor as a soldier of France that his name should never be revealed by me. I—"

"Oh, honor, honor!" broke in Jacques vehemently. "What has honor to do with it? Can't you see that Simon here— Oh, for the love of God, Simon, put down that pistol until the affair is completed. How can one make arrangements while you stand there with a pointed pistol? For heaven's sake, put the cursed thing down."

Simon dropped his hand. "Hurry then," he remarked to the General.

"Now, Prince," said Despard.

"Yes, General," replied the boy.

"It is your life that is at stake—it is true that I die with you, but that is of no account. I am asked, in exchange for your life, to give the name of this man to whom I have pledged my word. You have heard what I said. You will forgive me that I cannot give that name?"

"It is now or later," returned the Prince with a little shrug. "I am somewhat tired. Will it not be well to finish at once?"

"Well?" asked Simon, fidgeting with his pistol. He looked at the General.

The General opened his mouth and closed it again without speaking.

In the silence, the hiss of the gas sounded intolerably loud.

The young Prince looked up at the leaping flame, curiously, then plunged his hands in his pockets and turned his attention to Simon.

"Well?" repeated Simon, and as the General still made no reply, he deliberately cocked the pistol, and with a shrug turned to the Prince Imperial.

"One moment," interposed Jacques, and with a quick movement he placed himself between Simon and the boy.

"Why?" asked Simon. "There is no more to be said. Stand aside."

"You will shoot him?" asked Jacques.

Simon smiled faintly at so futile a question.

"Ah, yes, of course. It is agreed," said Jacques. He took out a handkerchief and wiped his forehead and the palms of his hands. "It is agreed, yes.

But what good can come of it? We place ourselves in an impossible position. All our work will be undone. No! No! I see clearly now that it will not do. We must not kill the boy. We must keep him alive. I have a great plan. I cannot put it all before you now. But tomorrow I will explain." He spoke feverishly, desperately, and as he spoke he rolled his handkerchief in his hands.

"We are agreed. It is too late to change our plan. Is it not so?" asked Simon, looking at the other three men.

"Yes, yes. It is agreed," one of them replied, and the other two nodded their heads.

"But my plan. You have not heard," cried Jacques.

"It is no plan," returned Simon.

"Ah! Listen!" said Jacques. "Listen then, you great pighead. We must ask him"—he pointed to the erect, still figure of the General—"we must ask him name by name: is it this one of us who has betrayed the society? So I will begin. Was it I, General Despard? Was it I?"

The General stood erect, and made no answer.

"Look you, he will not answer," said Simon. "Your plan is foolishness. Let us be done with it. Stand aside!" He threw out his left arm, and pushing Jacques roughly back against the table, raised his pistol.

But Jacques recovered himself before Simon could fire, and again interposed his body between him and the person of the Prince.

"One moment," he said. "Give me time. I—"

The voice of the General came suddenly from the gloom. "There are two men here," he said, "who are not afraid to die. Is it not so, my Prince?"

"Oh, I! I weary of this waiting," replied the young Napoleon.

"I also," grunted Simon.

"There must be some way out," urged Jacques.

"None," said Simon.

"We have gone too far," put in Michel, coming forward. "Simon's great plan has failed. Now we must escape from our own difficulty. The boy dies, and

if Monsieur the General elects to die also, our difficulty is solved for the time. The traitor, whoever he may be, will have lost his ally among the police, and we must watch among ourselves; we must establish an espionage."

"It is true," grunted Simon.

"No, but it is impossible," said Jacques. "The General has our pledge of safe return—"

"I do not return alive unless the Prince accompanies me," said the General.

"Voilà," said Simon. "We are released from our pledge. We shall, at least, have accomplished something. My plan has not completely failed."

"It is time the thing were over and that we dispersed," put in one of the other three.

In that cold, dark room, seven men were assembled—for, indeed, we must allow that title to the boy of eleven who stood with his hands in his pockets, looking quietly from one to the other of the speakers. And among the seven, six appeared so calm, so self-contained, that an observer might have thought they discussed some matter of ordinary business with no more heat than is common to the excitable blood of the Latin races.

But the seventh, the poet Jean Jacques, was dripping with perspiration, which the fierce application of his now sodden handkerchief could not absorb. His legs trembled so that he had to grip the edge of the table in order to maintain his place between Simon Lebrun and the young Napoleon.

"You are very distressed," said Michel. "If you cannot nerve yourself to the sight of death, you may go. Your part is to scheme and invent rather than to carry out the plan. Is it not so, Simon?"

Simon nodded. "Go then, Jean," he said. "Your duty has been well done."

"Yes, yes," agreed the other members of the society. "Jean has not failed us. Let him go."

"Yes, I will go," agreed Jacques. "I am tired and faint, and I loathe the sight and thought of killing. As you say, I have served you well. Now I may leave the rest to you."

Slowly he crossed the room toward the door by which he and the General had entered, and then he turned and looked keenly at Despard. The old man did not answer his gaze. He stood quietly erect as if on parade, a soldier on guard awaiting his relief. His eyes looked straight before him, with the quiet assurance of one who has not failed in the smallest detail of his duty.

Jacques's gaze was riveted on the old man's face.

"*Monsieur le Général*," he said.

"Well, monsieur," replied the General without turning his eyes.

"You think I am a coward?"

"Truly," returned the General.

Jacques drew himself up. "It is easy for you; you have no imagination," he said.

"Hurry, then," muttered Simon.

"There is no need for hurry," replied Jacques. He had suddenly recovered his self-control. "There is no need for hurry. Give me your pistol, Simon." He stretched out his hand.

"What is this?" asked Simon, perplexed.

"Your pistol, Simon," repeated Jacques, and he strode across the room and took the weapon from his leader's hand. "It is loaded?" he asked. "It will not misfire? Good. If I failed, I could not bring myself to a second attempt. Listen, then, all of you. You think I am a coward. You think I fear the sight of blood. It is not true. I am the bravest of you all." He had backed to the door, and now he stood with his head thrown back, looking round on the expectant group, who all—even the General, as he confessed—believed that Jacques was about to carry out the duty which his fellow revolutionists esteemed so lightly.

"Pooh! There is no need to give us the proof," grunted Simon. "We believe in you."

"Bah!" shouted Jacques. "What do I care for your belief? Blockheads, all of you, without imagination or soul. Is the lion afraid because he leaps on his prey, or the prey because it lies still, paralyzed with fear? I condemn you all as soulless animals. I see and know;

I have opportunity to escape, and yet with all the power of my vision I am not afraid. Truly, among you there is but one brave man and that is I—Jean Jacques, the poet."

And then, swiftly, as though even then he doubted his own strength, he raised the pistol to his temple and fired.

With all his courage, he had not dared to make confession.

"I am released from my word," came the calm voice of General Despard. "The name of the traitor among you was—Jean Jacques the poet."

Simon's inspiration had not failed.

And all the intricate plot woven by the hand of fate had worked to this small end, to the death of one Jean Jacques, an unknown French poet.



THE CLOSE

By C. Hilton-Turvey

ICE itself is not more cold
Than love that wearies;
Nor fangèd wolf is crueller
Than passion sated with itself.

Once, but a moon ago,
We watched the stars
Come out to prick
The dusk with silver.
The linnet's lilt
Still echoed in the wood;
The saffron rose
Still breathed of noon.

And thou, Beloved—
Aye, beloved yet!—
Close leaned the pulsing marvel
Of thy heart
Against mine own,
Deeming the twilight and the flowering stars,
Echo of song,
Breath of the dreaming rose,

Drew all their magic
And their charm
From love—
From love alone.

Ice itself is not more cold
Than love that wearies;
Nor fangèd wolf is crueller
Than passion sated with itself.

"WHAT DO YOU THINK?"

By Barry Benefield

HE kept edging out on the Williamsburg Bridge, stopping frequently to look around him and then down at the gently surging river beneath. The night was cold, and he seemed to be the only person on the tremendous steel structure. The great clock in the Metropolitan Tower, further up and across the quieting town, whanged out the hour of one. Smothering an exclamation of impatience, he slipped hurriedly around a huge upright beam; his hand touched a woman standing there, and he jumped back.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he exclaimed, dropping his hand. "I am sorry. Did I frighten you?"

"Oh, no; I saw you coming. What do you mean by following me? Oh, I saw you skulking at my heels. And I saw you here last night, too. I suppose my father hires you and your kind to do that. Well, if you're to get a fee for stopping me you'll not earn anything. Nobody can stop me."

She roughly brushed back and fastened in place several strands of black hair that the north wind had torn loose and was beating into her eyes. She stood erect against the guarding network of steel, pounding her gloved right hand on a crossbeam, looking hard at the little man by her side, over whom the light from the nearest incandescent globe shone, revealing a high, thin nose and heavy-lidded eyes. He leaned forward and gazed down at the gurgling water. At first it seemed that he had not heard what she had said. Then he turned to look at her; and she saw a smile start creeping across his pale face, but it died and dissolved before it had got halfway. He stared down at the

water again. Waiting a long, slow minute, he took up the conversation, effortfully, as if he were pulling himself out of a deep study.

"I see," he said. "I wish I could laugh; it ought to be laughed at, but I haven't done that in a long time now. As a matter of fact, both last night and tonight, I saw you here acting somewhat as I was, that is, furtively; and I thought at first that perhaps you were following *me*, though why I couldn't at all make out. We have passed each other two or three times within the last fifteen minutes, you know. Then I noticed that you, too, were looking down at the river often, and, it seemed to me, longingly; and I thought you also might have come to—to—"

"Go into it? Yes, and then?" She moved closer to him.

"And the thought of jumping at the same time fascinated me," he went on. "Company in the thing seemed comfortably enticing. I have been waiting here — unmanly — cowardly — have been waiting for comfort in such a business."

"Ah! The river!" she breathed. "The dear old thing *is* beautiful tonight, isn't it? Do you hear the ice tinkling in it?"

"Yes, I love the old East River." His voice was just a little enthusiastic. "It took the place up here of my Batouche Bayou and Crebiche Lake down home, where I fished and swam when a boy."

Neither said anything for a moment. She moved away from the light and into the shadow of a giant arm of steel, he following her slowly.

"Those lonely lights all along the

shores are blinking weakly," she ventured tentatively, "as if the wind were slowly freezing them to death. But the water down there, rolling and smiling, doesn't it seem inviting? Seeing those golden-eyed ferries sliding across it and those boats riding so easily at the piers makes you think for a second that nothing could sink in it. Look at it heave and make signs. God! I love it, too."

"The water has always fascinated me," he said reminiscently. "And now that it is all over with me, it seems better than carbolic acid or gas—at least for a man."

His voice had fallen back into a wearied monotone.

"Ugh! Gas! Don't speak of it, man. It's awful—the coming back to life in case you get caught. It's worse than the most horrible death itself. And they drag you back, the meddling asses, whether you want to come or not, with their fiendish pumping machines and things. Please don't speak of gas!"

She was beating hard at the cold steel beam in her emphasis.

"Heavens, how you do suffer coming back!" she went on, as if unwilling to drop the subject in spite of its repugnance to her. "Somebody always smells it and gives the alarm. I call upon heaven by habit. I don't believe in it—don't believe in anything now—don't believe in you—don't be—"

"It doesn't matter," sighed the man. "Well, I'm going to jump now." He put his foot on a lower piece of the railing. "No, the lady first." Again a smile started to cross his face, dying in transit. "I beg your pardon. I'll turn my back while you get over."

"Thank you."

"If a policeman or anybody interferes," he continued in explanation, "I'll keep him back so that the lady at least can do the thing unhindered. I don't see a single living soul here now except ourselves, but one may leap up from nowhere. I'll come after you."

"You keep him back?" She looked down at him, as if amused. "You'd better let *me* do that." She smiled, and then hurried on seriously. "But forgive me—I didn't mean to hurt you;

you men pride yourselves on your superior strength, wanting to do everything on the assumption that women are so weak."

"Not I. It doesn't matter, though."

"On this bitter night, you may rest assured, all the bridge officers are over there in that saloon near the Williamsburg approach. And I don't blame 'em much."

"Yes, I suppose so," he assented.

"Are you cold?" There was a note of concern in her voice. "Let me put this around you. Yes, yes, now; nobody will ever see you here with a woman's cloak on—not here in the shadow even if an automobile passed within six feet of us. I am wrapped up too much already; I am smothering."

He submitted silently to the wrapping up, his attitude seeming to repeat his wearied phrase, "Oh, what's the difference?"

"I don't *feel* cold, though." He took up the conversation as if it were an old, old one. "I don't notice anything now; nothing makes the slightest difference. You spoke of the wind whistling, of the ice tinkling down there in the river—or did you? I have forgotten. I call myself to notice it. I suppose some of my answers do sound a bit rambling. I reckon I'm losing my mind. Else I shouldn't be doing this thing—should I?"

"So? And you believe in the lunatic theory, too, do you?" she asked quickly. "Listen to me, and then tell me if you think I am crazy. Just a little now, and we'll both go over together."

"Why wait? It makes no difference."

"You're not listening; listen, please." Impulsively she reached out her hand toward his arm, but drew it back quickly. "My father is a mean, narrow, petty, miserly man, a—"

"How can you talk this way to a stranger?" he interrupted, not turning his head.

"Oh, what does it matter now? Standing on the edge of this jumping-off place, I feel suddenly, strangely, gloriously free of all forms, all restraint. It is positively intoxicating to say right out for once what is on my mind, with

no limitations whatever of any kind, with no 'ifs' or 'buts.' I say my father is a mean, narrow, petty, cheap man. He's got all the money anybody need want; I don't mean he's poor—he's just cheap. You understand.

"Do you know how he made his money? Of course you don't. Well, he's a great merchant prince, as they say in the newspapers—importer and exporter of bones. He handles more bones, I am told, than any other man alive, and he's so proud of it that he talks about it in his sleep. He's called the Bone King. As he says, we've got to have handles for toothbrushes, knives and the like, and the skeletons of cows, horses, dogs and hogs that are found in the cattle country after the vultures have stripped them might as well as not be collected and shipped for the Bone King's profit; but—well, thank heaven, my mother's people made their money out of land, and she left all I shall ever need directly to me. I don't have to live on bones—haven't had to, I mean.

"Oh, my mother was different, so different. But she died a long time ago. That's the only fine, *live* thing I've had in all the world to love—her memory! Dear, fine, old mother!"

She stopped talking a moment, and bent her head over the railing and looked down at the water. Shaking herself after a while as if throwing off a hindering emotion, she went on steadily:

"Yes, all I have had to love, a memory. And I have wanted to love—I'm bound to love or die from inside burning. I'm nothing now except a horrible, flaming emptiness. I can't help it; that's the way I'm made. There came a creature who wanted to marry me. He—"

"Aren't you forgetting who I am?" put in the man again.

"I tell you it doesn't matter," she said impatiently. "Listen, and say if you think I'm a lunatic for wanting to do this thing—not that it will make any difference what you say. This creature has a frame like a mastodon—I have often noticed my father looking at his bones covetously—and when he gets old he'll be as fat as a sideshow freak. And

what do you suppose his business is? Well, *his* father has cornered the fertilizer market of the world! Think of it—union of the Princess of the Royal House of Bones to the Prince of the Royal House of Guano! He will succeed his father, and he worships the business. So much for him; I say no more. I sent him packing. I think he was relieved; I am sure he felt we'd not be comfortable together in the same house, and he must have his comfort.

"Then there was my brother left for hope. He's a year older than myself. He was sent to Germany, among some relatives, to be educated when our mother died. He was seven years old then. I saw practically nothing of him as he grew up. I was at this and that school in the fall, winter and spring of every year; and the bone business is so pressing in the summer that my father would not take me abroad."

"Look here," broke in the man, "do you really think you ought to be telling me all this?"

"Listen to me," she commanded. "What does it matter now? You don't know what a relief it is to blow off this steam; it's been making a long, long time, I can tell you. Of course I could always talk to myself, but one's self is a poor, poor audience. Now that I've got you, I'm going to unburden myself. It won't hurt you, anyhow. Then you can say whether you think I'm a lunatic for wanting to jump down out of it all."

"Oh, what difference would it make?"

"Though I saw next to nothing of my brother as he grew from boy to man," she went on, "I thought from his photographs that he was going to be the same sort of man that our mother was a woman; in physical bulk he was like her. He came back six months ago. I have had ample time to look into him. He's his father's son. He already has charge of the Department of Green Bones—new bones, you know, that they make glue out of, and gelatine and things. Oh, he's a true Bone Prince."

She stopped talking, breathing hard, beating on the steel beam in front of her nervously, excitedly. The ice tinkled faintly down in the river below them.

A string of barges, loaded with garbage, drifted down toward the bridge, their pungent, fetid odor shooting through and soiling the clean air for a second.

"And so I am sick of it all," she continued. "There is nothing left for me, *absolutely* nothing. I took to painting. I had piddled with it at school. I studied it afterward seriously. I rented a studio, as they all do, and tried to be a Bohemian. That's mighty stale living for me. Work *never* filled me wholly, and now, somehow, I don't care for it at all, can't do it any more. I don't know where to turn; there seems to be in all the world for me just nothing, nothing, nothing! And down there in the river there is nothing for me, either—except perhaps an anesthetic for a heart pain that *feels* as if it would last forever. I say 'perhaps an anesthetic' because I often doubt if death itself can fill up the bottomless loneliness in me. But it may—it may; and isn't even the *chance* worth a great deal?"

"Yes," he answered, not looking up.

"Well, say something—*please*. What do you think? You're looking down into the river. You haven't heard me; you—"

"Yes, yes," he answered impatiently.

"So you think I'm a lunatic?" she asked.

"No, I suppose not. What's the difference?"

"And you?" she asked. "What is your—"

"It doesn't matter."

"Come, come, now; tell me," she urged insistently.

"It makes no difference."

"Some people do it because they *are* cowards," she ventured. "Here, I'll fasten that wrap on you. You're letting it fall off. There! That looks better."

"I suppose so. I am surprised that you talk like this to me."

"Oh, what *does* it matter now? You're a fellow in purpose with me, and you're at least not a barbarian, I see."

"Barbarian? How do you mean that? It reminds me of the university. We used to call the non-frat students 'barbs.' There was a shade of interest in his voice.

"Of course," she ran on. "We girls did, too. Weren't we dreadful little snobs then?"

"Well, maybe I *am* a coward," he began wearily. "There have been only my mother and myself for a long time now. She sold out the old place down in Louisiana to come East fifteen years ago; for I was to be a great and famous lawyer, you see, and she wanted to get me first to the fine schools and then to an arena worthy of a tremendous lawyer. God! Hear me laugh; but it's the laughter that substitutes for tears."

He hadn't laughed, as a matter of fact; another weary smile, crippled at its birth, had died crossing his face.

"Yes, go on," prompted the woman.

"My mother now gloats over her boy's sterling honesty—that's what she calls it. It's *all* she has had to gloat over. Now and then she reads accounts of mothers and sisters going to cells to see sons and brothers—you know, cashiers, bookkeepers and the like who have fallen, poor devils! She is not vulgar enough to express in words her fancied triumph over these women, but always after reading such an article she follows me about proudly with her eyes for days. I have given her motherly triumph in that way only. And she *did* want to be proud of *something*."

"Well, and then she has said many a time that she'd rather see a member of her family dead than tainted with dishonesty. She absolutely worships honesty; to tell the truth, for a century the family has had little else, but *that* it has always had, and untarnished. The law, I believe, would call me dishonest now."

"You're not, though," the woman at his side put in emphatically. She laid her hand on his arm. "Go on," she said. "I am listening."

"Thank you for standing up for me so readily, but you don't know yet. For seven or eight years I have had a small insurance business over there in Williamsburg, representing several old-line companies. It made us a fairly good living; indeed, it made us about all we wanted."

"Well, last winter a little old woman who had carried fire insurance on her

house for many years said she couldn't pay her quarterly dues. She expected to be in better circumstances by summer. The home is all she has in the world to keep her up; it's the rentals from three or four rooms that pay most of her running expenses. I stopped to ask myself what it would mean to her if that little frame house of hers went up in smoke some night, and—well, I have kept her policy alive by crediting to her account money paid in by other persons—without taking away from the payments of any one person enough to make his policy lapse. It's been going on so long now that my poor little business and books are in a tangle.

"If she had paid up in the summer, as she hoped and tried to do, everything would square up now; and when the inspector comes around next month to make his annual investigation of the business he would have found everything all right. She just couldn't pay. Two of her roomers left her, and she wasted what was for her considerable money advertising for others. The rooms are still empty. I expected to make good if the old woman didn't. Unfortunately I can't.

"That has been my only irregularity. I use that word to soothe my conscience. But, don't you see, if I were alive when the inspector discovered this thing next month, I'd be prosecuted for an example. I being dead, however, and the amount being small, and there being no hope of getting it out of my estate, because I haven't any estate, the company will let the matter drop. It's their policy. It's better business—that is, if I am dead, because then, you see, there won't be any horrible example to put the law on. If I am down in the river, the company will take pains to keep the irregularity a secret; for if it made it public both the people in general and the company's other employees would simply say: 'Oh, these things are never found out until it's too late.'

"Then, when I am gone, my mother will go back to Louisiana, where she has many relatives who will be glad to take care of her the rest of her life. She will be measurably happy down there, I

think, though she and I have loved this city. Great God! How we *have* loved this big, fine, old city! If only one could be in it and also backed by happiness, then—"

Lifting his head, and sighing deeply, he looked northward and westward at Manhattan, still alight, with ardent affection shining through his face. Then, dropping his head again, he went on in his fatigued monotone, as if he were traversing ground often gone over before:

"She will always think I fell into the river, because I have spent so much time on its banks. If I keep on living the law will smash the only thing she has left to be proud of; if I die, accidentally, as she will think, she will have sorrow, yes, but she will be saved from shame. That's all."

"I see," said the woman, staring down at the gurgling, winking, beckoning river below.

"That's all," repeated the man after a long wait. "That's all. Let's go over now."

"No, no, here comes a car. You mustn't be seen, you know." She caught him by the arm.

"It doesn't mat—yes, you're right," he admitted. "I lose everything if anybody knows it wasn't accidental. We'll wait a minute."

"I'd like to meet your mother just once, anyhow." There was a wheedling note in the woman's voice. "Let's put this thing off till tomorrow night, because—"

"What?"

"Yes, yes; come now, you'll not refuse a lady. I'm going your way for a little piece; you live in Williamsburg, of course. Wait—just a minute. I'll take this cloak off you, because it doesn't fit any too snugly. You had forgotten that, hadn't you? If folks should see you and laugh—but hear me laugh. It sounds funny, strangely funny; I don't know what has come over me."

"No, I reckon I'd better jump now," said the man in his wearied monotone, not looking at the woman.

"Listen to the wind whistle," she put in hurriedly. "It's snowing, too. I

feel the cold now, don't you? I take your arm because it is cold. Hear my teeth chatter. Come. Are you a boor? A barb? A lady asks your company. What do you say?"

"Tomorrow night then—tomorrow night? Together? Will you be here?" He was insistent.

"Hear the old East River licking its piers," she rushed on without answering his question. "Hear the ice tinkling down there; it's like a prodigious bowl of something good to drink. My woman's blood is running warm again. Ha, it's fine, fine, fine!"

She stopped to inhale a deep breath of air with audible gratification, then walked on swiftly.

"Why, you're almost dragging me," he protested, smiling slightly, as the two went hurrying down the Williamsburg approach.

"Pardon; I'm always in a hurry, you know. Then it is so beastly cold here on the bridge now. The wind is sweeping us, and I feel the snaggy teeth of a blizzard. Isn't it cold to you? See the ferries; they are running to cover, too. Their blinking lights are pretty. We're going almost as fast as that car yonder. You can hear those girls inside laughing. They've been to a theater or to a shindig of some sort with their best fellows—and I wish you luck, Becky, Mag and Tess. Hear me laugh, too? It sounds good—and odd. Let's get off this windy bridge."

"Tomorrow night?" he asked again, turning his head to look scrutinizingly at her.

"Plenty of time before next month, when that inspector is due," she rushed on. "Don't hurry in this business. What if the old woman paid up just the week before the inspector came around? Does she know how serious it is for you? No, of course not; *you* wouldn't tell her. If she knew, she'd sell the house before she'd let you do this, or mortgage it."

"Oh, I reckon I'm not much good, anyhow," he said.

"See the Metropolitan Tower over there," she ran on excitedly. "Can you tell from here just where the two big lighted hands are on the clock? I make

it out to be one thirty. Look at that gold dust hanging in the air above upper Broadway. That comes from the burning of gold beneath. Broadway above Times Square isn't thinking of going to sleep; and over there in Williamsburg everybody is asleep. You and your mother and myself will have dinner together next Sunday."

"What do you mean?" His voice was anxious.

"Yes, yes, plenty of time for that before the inspector comes around. We'll eat at your house, too. You've invited me, you know. Oh, yes, you have. I *must* get to know your mother. Hear me laugh like a girl again; but I'm not laughing *at* anything—I'm laughing *with* everything—the stars, the fishes in the river, the rats under the piers, the birds in the park, the thousands of mothers and babies lying asleep over yonder in Brooklyn dreaming pleasant dreams.

"And then you and your mother will be with me the Sunday after that, at my studio, one of the quietest, most comfortable places in Manhattan; it's my home in more ways than just a kitchenette and a dinky bungalow bed. I don't bluff at painting any more; I just potter around in the place. Do you know, I'm going to *love* your mother. I feel it."

She was talking with a thrilling new enthusiasm.

"I begin to feel cold myself," said the man. "To notice it, rather. I suppose I have been cold all the time. Let's hurry."

They had now left the bridge plaza and were walking up a clean little side street, swinging along with easy stride.

"I am like a mind reader hunting for a lost prize," the woman ran on, smiling. "I guide myself according to the pressure of your arm. I am going to see you home, because you are worse off than I am this night. Then I'll take a car for my bungalow bed."

"You will not take it without me," he said argumentatively. "I want you to meet my mother; she always waits up for me. Then, if you won't stay at our house, I'll see you home."

"Well, we'll argue that when we get to your house," she answered.

He stopped suddenly as if he had forgotten something. His voice lost its momentary animation, falling back into its fatigued monotone:

"Tomorrow night? You'll come, won't you? You—"

"Whew!" the woman whistled, refusing to notice his question. "It *is* cold, beastly cold, isn't it? The wind will freeze us, will freeze us into stiff conventions again if we don't watch out. Let's walk faster. Ha, now the blood races warm again."

She had hold of his arm with her right hand, caressingly, and with her left she was having some difficulty holding on her hat, which the wind was attacking. They walked on silently, thinking their own thoughts and keeping them within themselves, for the time—

"Do you know," he spoke up after a while, as if he had just come out of some path of far-away thought, "you ought not to do this thing. You've got lots to live for. Forget your father and brother if you like; though maybe when you *feel* better they'll *look* better to you. You know, the way you feel, even the way you hold your body, has a lot to do with the way you think. Don't the psychologists say that if you hold your body in a posture of dejection you'll feel as if the heavens had crumbled in on you?"

"Goodness knows what the psychologists say; I don't."

"Anyway, you're sure to find somebody, something to live for," he insisted.

"It seems a hideous shame to smother in the black slime of the East River all that raging, glorious life that is in you. Ugh, it makes me creepy to think of you down there. Wait a year longer. Before that is over, I'll bet life is *singing* through you, re-making you and making music for the people lucky enough to be around you. I'm not going to wait for you tomorrow night, that's all. I won't do it."

"Why, I've got *less* to live for than you, man," she said argumentatively. "To begin with, you've got that fine old mother. That miserable, picayunish insurance bugbear can be killed easily. It's only a matter of a little money, anyhow. Money is the least important thing in

the world. Now I think of it, it is simply ridiculous for you to lash yourself into a fit about that petty thing. And the old woman will pay if you get after her. You'll give me her name and address when we come to the next street light. I'll show her *how* to get roomers. She doesn't know how to advertise properly, I'll warrant you. I'll fill her house in a week. Give her a week longer, won't you, just a week?"

"But about *you*," he persisted. "Why don't you try it a year longer? I think you're making a great mistake, a very great mistake. Won't you wait a week, to think it over?"

"I will if you will," she promised eagerly.

"All right," he agreed.

"Cross your heart," she commanded, laughing.

"Cross my heart."

They walked on, she with a jaunty air, talking headily, striding with a long free swing of the limbs, swishing energetically her cheerful-sounding clothing; he almost strutting at her side. They did not say anything for a minute or two. A dairy wagon boy, beginning early on his route, got down from his wagon, blew frostily on his hands and poured some milk in a pail waiting on a doorstep.

"Hark! The sound of falling waters!" said the man.

The big woman laughed, triumphant; and they turned around a corner.

"You go into that next house, don't you?" she asked presently.

"Yes—but how did you know?"

"I read the pressure of your arm again. It said: 'Slow speed forward.'"

They mounted the low front stoop of a small frame house, and the man fitted a key into the lock. Standing up straight suddenly, and smiling radiantly, he said: "By the way, what *is* your name? I am going to introduce you to my mother."

And then the man, as well as the woman, began laughing, and they kept it up until the door was opened by a white-haired old lady. The big woman whispered to her companion, touching her lips thrillingly against his ear; and they went on into his house.

THE STAGE ENTRANCE

By Frederick Lovelace Macon

SOME low black houses line the street;
And, where the phantom chimneys meet
The deep, gray sky, their outlines blend.

The shutters are but deeper black
Against the walls, but two, thrown back,
Into the street a glimmer send.

A dismal hack waits at the right—
The horses' nostrils breathing white—
The man a specter in the night.

A narrow gloom-packed alleyway,
Leading beneath an arch of gray,
And opposite a gas-light's flare.

And under it a woman stands
With painted cheeks and jeweled hands—
The wan light on her yellow hair.



THE SHADOW OF ASPIRATION

By Robert Haven Schauffler

MY summit calls. Its floors are shod
With rainbows laughing up to God.

But ah, the jagged ways and bleak
That give upon that lonely peak!



DRAMATIC CRITIC—One who enjoys only the intermissions.

THE PATH OF VIRTUE

By Robert Garland

THE mattress was three feet wide, and six in length. It was hard, being stuffed with straw. There was no bed. The mattress formed an island on the floor of an all but unfurnished room. Upon the mattress a woman lay. She was awake, staring with empty eyes at the cracked ceiling.

Emmy Weston was balancing her account with life. She was a sinuous, pretty woman, with soft, dark hair massed unaffectedly above her brown eyes and a mouth unusually appealing. About her slim figure was a suggested fullness. She was, in a word, one of those women men turn to look at because of their unconscious but none the less poignant sex appeal.

The room was cold. In a corner a fireless stove mocked its own suggestion of heat. On the sill, amid a litter of pans and soiled crockery, a geranium died scarletly, reminding Emmy of a very ancient gentlewoman who had remained cheerful until the end in the face of frightful odds. The geranium's clash of passion sounded loud in the quietude. Outside the snow fell hesitatingly, as if it found the earth a grim and unattractive place. Almost an hour ago the sun had set, glowing in a bank of sullen clouds. Night had come suddenly, and the arc lights fretted in the streets below. Their light, piercing the smeared panes of the two small windows, cast abnormalities upon the ceiling. The woman outlined them with her eyes time and time again, trying not to think.

At twenty-two the vista of a past seems long. To the young woman lying in the chill dusk it seemed years since she had left for the city. She had

not actually sinned, but the wages of circumstantial evidence is social death—or else oblivion. She, perhaps unwisely, had chosen the latter, thereby suffering both. Her mother had believed in her, she felt. Her mother had believed as mothers do, blindly, often erroneously, with a divine disregard for evidence. Her father, a domineering mass of prejudice and custom, was long since past the believing years. He turned her from his home, and by this time had probably forgot her. She was therefore now gazing at the shadowed ceiling, hungry in body and in soul. Had her father held out his hand to her, how different would things have been, she thought. She broke off her thoughts. . . . He had not held out his hand.

Work she had procured in a shop; one can somehow manage on six dollars a week, but one cannot save. After the strain of the Christmas holidays she was honorably discharged. The season was slack; times were hard. Day after day she had vainly trudged the streets in search of employment of any kind. For each position there were many applicants. She had never been the favored one.

Her possessions she had disposed of one by one; even her clothing she had sold, with the exception of a quiet dark suit and small black hat. And in the china bowl on the mantelshelf was a coin or two. She had fought a good fight with the odds against her, and she had lost. The end—whatever it was to be—was very near, for the time had come when she must decide how to live or how to die. She had no doubt but she was losing her grip on life. She turned her face toward the wall and

pulled the quilt—discarded by the room's former occupant—up over her.

It was a little warmer now; she was growing drowsy with hunger and fatigue. She would close her eyes—darkness always brought relief. The noises from the street grew soft and yet more soft; even the mechanical piano in the saloon below ceased for the moment its endless repetition of popular airs. After a while, outside, muffled by the falling snow, a clock struck six. But Emmy Weston did not hear . . .

Out of the darkness had come a dream.

The Blue Ridge in June!

From the crest—up Buena Vista way—the Valley of the Cumberland stretches as far as the eye can reach and then away beyond. Down below, seemingly at one's very feet but in reality far away, lies Waynesboro, sleepily content, the smoke of its chimneys making magic spirals in the soft summer air. The ever-present mountain silence broods over the valley and its encompassing hills, broken occasionally by the distant shriek of a trolley's whistle or the deeper call of an engine puffing up the grades. Yet these sounds only seem to accentuate the all-pervading air of peacefulness.

The cottage of John Weston turns its back on the Cumberland to look upon the steeply winding mountain road leading to the summit. It is a small whitewashed structure, unadorned save for a few crimson roses about the door. The garden from which the family living is procured slants dizzily to the tumbling pigpens several hundred yards away. There is nothing unusual about the place; its replica may be found almost anywhere along the valley from nearby Pen Mar to Fayetteville, fifteen miles beyond. It has no more individuality than one of the hens scratching about the unkempt yard.

On this morning in June John Weston was standing in the doorway gazing expectantly along the rocky road which curves out of view a short distance beyond his home. A tall, gaunt man he was, forbiddingly austere, a man one

knew to be friendless and alone. His wife stood silently beside him, a faded woman with scarce a spark of femininity left in her. A gingham apron all but covered her from head to foot; a gingham sun bonnet was on her head. There was a hoe in her roughened hand.

A horse and buggy turned the curve, drew up before the rose-framed door. A girl, plainly clad but pretty with the healthy prettiness of the country, jumped from the vehicle and tied the slightly lame horse to a post outside the little gate sagging on its one remaining hinge.

"Home at last," she announced, smiling. "I thought I'd never get here. Were you and mother frightened?"

John Weston did not move.

"Where've yer bin?" he asked abruptly. "Thet's what we want ter know. Where've yer bin?"

The woman beside him in the doorway reached up and picked a rose, then tore it to pieces nervously.

The girl laughed a bit uneasily.

"Oh, such an adventure!" she said. "Just like a book. After the picnic Mr. Thornton, an awfully nice city gentleman I met, asked if he might fetch me home. I asked Sam's permission and Sam said *he* didn't care. So Mr. Thornton started home with me—"

"We know all that," interrupted John Weston fiercely. "City fellers has always bin too fond of yer. What yer ma and me are gettin' at is what kep' yer out all night. Sam's bin home since afore daybreak."

Emmy trembled visibly.

It is difficult to tell the truth to unbelieving ears.

"Mr. Thornton started home with me. Crossing the little bridge near Waynesboro, the mare picked up a nail. Limped something awful, she did. We couldn't get it out, and the others had gone ahead. She was limping dreadfully when we reached the village, and the doctor said she couldn't go a step further without getting lockjaw sure enough. Mr. Thornton was worried; he didn't know what to do. The trolley wasn't running and he had to be in the city early in the morning. So we stopped at

the hotel all night. He got me the loveliest room, and then—"

John Weston broke in sharply.

In his tone was an undercurrent of that anger which is beyond vocal expression; one makes it known by brute force, or by silence. His voice, when he spoke, quavered queerly, and there was a hard glitter in his eyes.

"Sam hinted as much," he told her, "but yer ma and me didn't believe him. You don't expect us to take stock in yer story, do yer?"

"It's true," she said. "God knows it's true."

There was something of her father's anger in her tone.

John Weston laughed.

It was a sound she could never forget.

"There was no harm," said she.

"There was nothing else to do."

John Weston ignored her plea.

"Pack yer bag and go, d'ye hear? Not another word. Yer ma'll help yer with yer things. Then I'll drive yer to the train. Go to yer feller in the city—that's where sech as yer belong. There's no place fer yer here in the mountains."

The woman in the doorway sobbed quietly, using a corner of her apron to dry her eyes. But her father never spoke to her again. He turned, stooping, and entered the cottage door. And in a second Emmy was in her mother's arms.

But even then the scene failed to impress her one way or the other. It all seemed impersonal, aloof from her everyday existence. It brought to mind a play, a rather crude play, she had seen with her mother in the city several years ago. She felt that it was nothing more than a colored interlude in her dull gray mountain existence.

Later, when in the train alone, she began to comprehend.

A wagon bearing rails clanged up the uneven street.

The woman upon the mattress turned uneasily, flinging out an arm from beneath the ragged covering. Magically the clanging of the steel swung her from past to present, from June in the Cumberland to January in the city.

And there had been an adventure yesterday. It seemed weeks ago, but it was only a few hours back, and she had not eaten since. She had made a promise—what was it she had promised? It did not greatly matter.

The clang of frigid steel died away; the mechanical piano once more began its round of tawdry airs. Again Emmy faced the wall and closed her eyes. But this time she could not sleep. When one cannot build castles one may construct hovels. The process is much the same. The difference lies in the material at hand.

Yesterday she was standing on the sidewalk with the arc lights' glare about her. She was cold, and alone. Emmy knew that she made an alluring figure. By night the tired expression was not so apparent, and her eyes were large and warm. The snow had almost ceased. Many muffled figures swept it from the sidewalks in whirling clouds. Out of sheer bravado she hummed a little song.

A man spoke to her from out the snow-flecked gloom. He made her realize for the first time that she was standing before the plate glass window of an eating house. Several human derelicts loitered beside her watching a white-clad man dexterously turning batter cakes. Emmy had not even seen.

"Won't you have a bite to eat?" he asked.

His voice sounded far away. He repeated the invitation. It was a pleasant voice, she told herself. She was cold and tired and hungry and nothing really mattered.

The man touched her arm gently.

"Won't you have a bite to eat?" he repeated.

"I—I was just going to," she lied.

It was good to have someone to speak to, but she knew that should she accept such a favor from a stranger it would eventually mean but one thing. Emmy was quite honest with herself. When she entered the revolving door followed by the man she had entirely made up her mind. Whatever she might do, she would get neither food nor money under false pretenses.

Strangely enough Emmy liked him from the start. He had a frank, matter-of-fact way about him which, in her present helpless state, appealed to her. She had been growing romantic about her sufferings, had all but lost her sense of true proportion. He made her feel without telling her in so many words that Emmy Weston, or a hundred Emmy Westons, mattered not one way or the other in the world-old game of life and death. By the time coffee had been served he had told her a great deal about himself. His name was John King. He was a traveling salesman, but hoped to be permanently established in a large Eastern city soon, to marry and settle down. He was engaged to be married—but, then, that didn't matter.

As he talked on, deeply interested in himself, Emmy entered him in her mental journal. He had blond hair, close clipped but slightly waving; deep blue eyes and an engaging mouth. His age, she thought, was perhaps thirty. About him hung a general air of physical cleanliness. He gave the impression of having looked upon all sides of life, touched not a few, and of having still retained his self-respect.

Pushing back his cup, he interrupted her thoughts.

"Now," he smiled, "what's on your program?"

"As far as I'm concerned," she said, "the program is a blank. You are to fill it in."

He seemed surprised at her quiet acquiescence.

"What time must you be home?" he asked.

"I have no home," said she.

He caught her up.

"No home at all?"

For the first time he seemed to take an interest in her as a possible human being.

"Where do you sleep?" he questioned.

"I have a room."

"I see," he said. "A furnished room?"

"You could hardly call it a *furnished* room," she returned, and then inventoried its contents.

He listened attentively, a half-smile

upon his lips, but made no comment. Later, out in the street where the snow still fell, he took her hand in his as if to say good-bye. Emmy showed her astonishment. She feared he might mistake it for relief.

"Tonight I have a business appointment," he said, "but I want to see you tomorrow night. Give me your address, and I'll call for you. How'd half past eight do?"

She told him the number and the street.

Suddenly he faced her, as if he had just made up his mind on a debatable point.

"Have your things all packed," he said. "You may not know it, but you're going to move."

Emmy didn't understand.

"Yes," he repeated gaily, "you're going to move. I've figured the whole thing out. There's a nice little furnished flat I know of 'way uptown. There're two rooms and a bath in a quiet, out-of-the-way neighborhood. I'll arrange things tomorrow, and give you the apartment for your own. Would you like that?"

Emmy nodded, looking away.

The man gave her hand a tight squeeze.

"Tomorrow," he smiled.

"Tomorrow," she echoed.

"You'll be there?"

"Yes," said she, "at half past eight."

And John King was gone.

It was the increasing cold that drove the past away. From where she lay she could see that the snow had ceased. A moaning wind spoke beyond the glimmering window panes. It drove the cold into the room until the air seemed almost brittle in its texture. The street lamps swayed outside like paper lanterns. Emmy Weston turned her back and gazed again at their flickering lights upon the ceiling.

The clock struck eight.

Hurriedly she dressed in the room's half-light with the wind and the cold clutching at the window panes. She gave the mattress, the fireless stove, the litter of pans upon the sill and all the

other wretched contents of the more than wretched room a sweeping farewell glance; then, bag in hand, she descended to the street to wait.

John King was on hand promptly. Emmy gave him her hand, and they went to the same little restaurant, sat at the same table and were served by the same waiter. Their second dinner together was a very pleasant meal. They were both in the best of humor. John King had had a most successful day, and Emmy felt quite relieved now that she had decided to meet life on its own terms.

They then went uptown together. Emmy was delighted with the apartment; it seemed a marvel of elegance when compared with her meagre mountain home. There was a green carpet on the parlor floor, a field of overpowering emerald strewn with super-roses of a pallid shade of pink. The furniture might have been designed by the late Queen Victoria herself. There were several padded chairs of a delirious green and an inviting plumpness, from each corner of which a spindle leg protruded apologetically, as if ashamed of being attached to so rotund a body. And there was a sofa like the chairs.

A tall, thin brass table held a tall, thin brass and onyx lamp with a silk and lace shade, while on the white cabinet mantel were two chromatic vases, one containing red immortelles and the other a spray of artificial lilies whose pristine bloom had long since passed away. The gilt clock under the glass case showed a nude lady casually balancing a comparatively colossal timepiece upon two fingers of her left hand.

A week went by. John had told Emmy to get herself a maid, and this she had done. And now each morning she sipped her chocolate—it happened to be cocoa, but she didn't know the difference—in bed after John had left, just as she read of the elegant ladies doing in works of fiction, while her colored maid played "The Rosary" on the victrola that John had given her.

One evening when he returned to the apartment unusually early John found Emmy in tears.

He kissed her with an almost brotherly affection.

"What's wrong, dear?" he asked.

"Nothing," responded she, "nothing at all."

He sat beside her and stroked her hand.

"Tell me what's the matter," he insisted. "I have the right to know."

Emmy was, for the moment, conscience-stricken. During their week together she had told him almost nothing of herself although he had questioned her many times. But to a woman there always comes a time when she must speak, and today Emmy's time was upon her. She poured her story into his willing ears, told it frankly and with no garnishments.

He listened with silent interest.

John King liked the woman's outspoken sincerity, her lack of open sentimentality concerning her troubles. In the timbre of her tone was an honesty seldom found in a chance acquaintance of the streets; many told tales much the same, but they were always elaborated unduly, they always teemed with a pseudo-truthfulness too elaborately apparent to be genuine. And, although John would not even admit it to himself, he, with his middle class intolerance, was beginning to weary of Emmy and her rather pronounced lower class habits. In a word, he began to suspect that he had had enough of her. These ideas he did not put into so many words, but laid his resolution at the door of his better self.

When she had finished he asked:

"And you haven't seen this Thornton since you've been in town?"

She replied negatively.

"It wasn't *his* fault, you know."

The man looked at her and smiled.

"You country girls are rather innocent, after all," said John King. "I don't suppose that, by any chance, you remember the first name of Mr. Thornton?"

He made no comment when she told him it was "Walter."

Shortly after her confession he kissed her good-bye and left the apartment, pleading business.

That night he did not return, and Emmy lay in bed sobbing softly to herself, wondering in what way she had offended him and what was going to happen to her next. Dawn was leaking through the cracks about the window shades when sleep at last came her way. In the morning when she awoke the sun was pouring into her room and her maid was standing beside her bed, breakfast tray in hand.

Emmy spent the day, a long and dreary one, at home alone, and when her lover returned he found her waiting for him, dressed in the attractive evening gown he had given her.

It was after dinner when he said:

"I spent last night looking after you."

"After me!" said Emmy. "I thought you had a business engagement."

"Merely a fictitious excuse used daily in polite conversation," he said. "I went to see Walter Thornton. He's a friend of mine."

"Mr. Thornton?" She was entirely taken aback.

"Yes," he responded, "your friend of the picnic."

She felt she must say something, so: "How is he?" she inquired.

"Quite well," returned the man, "and married happily."

"Yes?" said Emmy.

The direct cause of her present state had long since ceased to interest her. She was much more concerned with the man across the table.

John King explained: "Thornton's story entirely agreed with yours. He was terribly upset when I told him the result of his hurrying back to town instead of seeing you safely home. He went to your father this morning by the early train, telling him nothing, of course, about our life together. Here is a wire I received from him this afternoon."

Emmy's hand trembled as she reached across the table for the yellow paper. At first she could not make out the typing, it danced so queerly before her eyes. The letters fell gradually into line.

Twice she read it before looking up: "Everything all right. Send Miss

Weston back on the 10.18. Her father will meet her at the train." It was signed simply "Walter."

"It can't be true," she told him. "Father isn't the kind to forgive after having once made up his mind."

John reached for the telegram. As his hand touched hers Emmy was strangely thrilled.

"The railway is planning a cut-off through the section including your father's place," he said. "When this was brought to your father's notice—"

With a gesture Emmy silenced him.

"I understand," she said. "Purchased forgiveness."

After a pause, Emmy held out her hand.

"Why did you do this?" she asked.

Her companion pushed back his chair.

"A man's something besides an animal, after all," he said.

The woman looked squarely into his eyes.

"And there was no other reason?" she asked quietly.

His eyes shifted uneasily.

"None," he told her. "None whatever."

Emmy did not reply.

As the train clamored through the bleakness of the night the woman pressed her forehead against the frigid pane and watched the lights shoot by. The car was close and stifling. It was an effort to think; try as she might, she could not but make the effort. . . .

So she was going home! Home to the loneliness of the little farm, to the drudgery of the daily life, to her father's brusqueness and her mother's well meant but incessant nagging. Home to the monotony of the mountains, to the dull conversation of the youthful mountaineers and their heavy, ever-apparent love-making. She would probably marry one of these youthful mountaineers some day, and grow up like her mother. She could plainly see herself standing, hoe in hand, in an humble doorway beside a gaunt, tall, silent man. For this man she would work; she would be as much his slave as if purchased in the open market. She would cook for him,

wash for him, rear his children, and, in her spare moments, hoe the garden and tend the pigs. She would deliberately sell herself for this, for something she desired not at all.

Why had she not sold herself for something more desirable? But she would be married. Married! Compared to John King, how soiled her husband's nails would be, how rough his hands, how unkempt his person! How stupid his occasional remarks during the long winter evenings which must be spent indoors! About him would be the odor of the farm. She could hear him breathing beside her in the narrow bed. . . .

The train jolted, then came to a sudden stop at some badly lighted station. Several silent men and women entered the car: a drunken man reeled down the narrow aisle, a flask of whiskey in his hand. Back near the door, where the stove sweltered in its heat, a baby, awakened by the noise and confusion, began to wail fretfully.

She took herself mentally in hand. The image of John King came before her; came and smiled upon her from beyond the car. . . . Saved! For what had she been saved? She knew that the happiness of the springtime should be in her heart, that she should be as glad as a sunny day in May. Had not the circuit rider told her many times that

virtue should be its own reward? Was it not along this path of virtue that the roses bloomed? But where was this springlike happiness, where this joyous handmaiden of Virtue? She did not know. She did not really care. Emmy could only see John King smiling radiantly at her from the darkness without. . . . He would soon forget.

Each moment the train was taking her nearer home. She pictured the bleakness of the wind-swept mountain station and her father's face, bearded and severe, as he stood waiting for her near the flickering oil lamp smoking before its rusted reflector. Beyond the snowy platform the mare shivered beneath her blanket.

Such would be her homecoming. And, without warning, the many comforts of her little apartment came before her. She glimpsed the ease of her recent city life thrown in ironic relief against the pictured discomfiture of her mountain home—the victrola, the morning cocoa, John's quiet, cleanly ways, her freedom from sordid cares and responsibilities such as were thrust upon her hourly at home. And as the train crawled through the bitter night these things grew very dear to her.

Outside the snow had begun again. The wind drove it against the window of the car, shutting out the darkness and the flitting lights.



A DAY

By Arthur Wallace Peach

A DAY seems but a fleeting breath of time,
Yet hearts there are in utter misery,
In depths so deep they cannot upward climb,
To whom this day shall be eternity!



WOMAN'S prayer is a rendezvous with God.

VIOLETS

By D. H. Lawrence

SISTER, tha knows while we was on the planks
 Aside o' th' grave, while th' coffin wor lyin' yet
On the yaller clay, an' th' white flowers top of it
 'Tryin' to keep off'n him a bit o' th' wet,

An' parson makin' haste, an' a' the black
 Huddlin' close together a cause o' th' rain,
Did t' 'appen ter notice a bit of a lass away back
 By a headstun, sobbin' an' sobbin' again?

—How should I be lookin' round
 An' me standin' on the plank
Beside the open ground,
 Where our Ted 'ud soon be sank?

Yi, an' 'im that young,
 Snapped sudden out of all
His wickedness, among
 Pals worse n'r ony name as you could call.

Let be that; there's some o' th' bad as we
 Like better nor all your good, an' 'e was one.
An' cos I liked him best, yi, bett'r nor thee,
 I canna bide to think where he is gone.

Ah know tha liked 'im bett'r nor me. But let
 Me tell thee about this lass. When you had gone
Ah stopped behind on t' pad i' th' drippin' wet
 An' watched what 'er 'ad on.

Tha should ha' seed her slive up when we'd gone,
 Tha should ha' seed her kneel an' look in
At th' sloppy wet grave—an' 'er little neck shone
 That white, an' 'er shook that much, I'd like to begin

Scaightin' mysen as well. 'En undid her black
 Jacket at th' bosom, an' took from out of it
Over a double 'andful of violets, all in a pack
 Ravelled blue and white—warm, for a bit

O' th' smell come waftin' to me. 'Er put 'er face
 Right intil 'em and scaighted out again,
Then after a bit 'er dropped 'em down that place,
 An' I come away, because o' the teemin' rain.

THE PALACE OF WISDOM

A Page from the Book of Broadway

By George Bronson-Howard

A NY great truth is half a lie: its falsity no less than its truth proving its greatness. So, if we say: "It is not *morals* but *men*," we should be right; but, unfortunately, we are not wrong when we say it is not *men* but *morals*. Thus, when the great William Blake wrote: "The Road of Excess leads to the Palace of Wisdom," he was an angel voicing a divine truth; but (to continue to borrow, momentarily, the style of G. K. C.) he was also a devil uttering a damnable lie.

The story of Anson Eagle and his shadow, Asa Winthrop, proves both contentions.

II

BLAKE also wrote: "If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise." But here he was undoubtedly *all* wrong. Had he said: "If the wise man persists in folly he will become wiser," he would have summed up the case of H. Anson Eagle; but Blake referred to such men as Asa Winthrop, and Asa, far from becoming wise, became a greater fool; although to begin with he was not any more of a fool than Eagle was. Winthrop had the same ambitions, aspirations and dreams of pleasure, but he lacked Eagle's self-possession: as some would say, wrongly, his conceit. Eagle never forgot he had the future to consider; never put both hands to the cup and drained it. He always saved some for tomorrow, yet to associate prudence with his romantic personality is to invite ridicule.

The world is divided into two classes: the first do as they think fit, regardless of

others' opinions; the second take their opinions ready made, and sin in secret, but are less the slaves of the first class than of their own cowardice. But the first class is not wholly admirable; a murderer may belong to it as much as a saint. To be regardless of the world's opinions is not always to be right, and Asa Winthrop was seldom right. He was merely in rebellion, and was never quite sure what he was rebelling about. He stumbled through a militant boyhood, sullen and stubborn, the despair of parents and teachers and equally unadmired by boys. While his character was forming at college, he heard of Anson Eagle, and that young gentleman seemed to his mind to be himself with greater privileges. So, as he was too wise to worship God, he worshiped a man, reading eagerly of Eagle's exploits and, later, endeavoring anxiously to insinuate himself into that set wherein Eagle moved.

There are some writers who, like Byron, begin to influence their age long before their writings are sufficiently sophisticated to influence anybody. Eagle was such a one: a newspaper hero. Anson Eagle broke into Associated Press dispatches before passing his first decade, when, as the leader of a band organized along the broad, free lines of the half-dime train robbers series, he ended in the Juvenile Court, and convulsed a continent with his fearless confessions, taking all blame upon himself and bidding the judge be indulgent with his "boys." After that his life could be read in the daily press: no incident too small to chronicle: Anson Eagle in school fighting the bully and pinning his hand to a desk with a jack-

knife; his expulsion; his enlistment in '98 and his disobedience of orders which brought him a court-martial for insubordination and, later, a medal for bravery; his adventures as an officer of the Philippine Constabulary (mostly lies); his exploits against smugglers as an officer of the Philippine customs (greater lies, still). A parcel of extravagant stories were printed, and when Eagle returned to the States he found women ready to idolize him.

Men hated him—they always hate the favorites of women; and Eagle encouraged their hatred, for he despised them. A picture of him at that time shows a slim, upstanding youth with a fine forehead and eyes, reckless lips, a sneering tilt to his nose. His clothes were London made: of soft, costly materials, and form-fitting. He wore soft collars of silk held stiff by concealed celluloid strips, and neckties in golds, greens and crimsons. One would have turned again to view him if only for his attire, contrasting so vividly with the dull, drab, formless American clothes of yesterday. Then, too, he seemed just to have bathed and brushed his shining hair: another contrast.

III

WINTHROP first saw Eagle in the flesh one Saturday night in Sydenham's, that great, gilt Longacre restaurant. Eagle, at that time, had had his first success as a writer, due almost altogether to the picturesque topics he wrote about rather than any real literary worth; although even then his hasty, unpolished style showed promise. But Winthrop saw the man in the stories and thought them masterpieces. Now that he saw the man himself, he was not disappointed: Eagle was what pictures of magazine heroes strive to be. Opposite him at table was a widely photographed beauty of the stage to whom he listened, casually, as one whose mind wanders afar.

"Waiter," said Winthrop, "what is that gentleman doing?" Eagle had placed a lump of sugar upon a pierced

spoon and was carefully saturating it with water, a drop at a time. "*Absinthe française*," returned the waiter. "Absinthe drip." "Fetch me some," said Winthrop. The waiter brought Pernod Fils, a carafe, sugar, a spoon, and instructed him. Winthrop disliked the paregoric taste but, seeing that Eagle encored his, did likewise. Then came soft, reposeful thoughts, and, as he sat, languidly, he saw his destiny on the job working out his life to a satisfactory, even thrilling, conclusion. Words leaped to lips hitherto restrained; those whom he met that night found him a boon companion. Some old acquaintances remarked upon his astonishing improvement. A celebrated person did him the honor of listening attentively to his revolutionary views upon sex.

The next night he took absinthe again, and continued for more than a year, until it was not a couple but a dozen a day. By the time he saw Eagle again it had begun to tell on Winthrop; his complexion was pasty, his eyes dull when not drinking; he ate scarcely enough to keep alive. All this he attributed to anything rather than the absinthe; he invented imaginary hereditary weaknesses and diseases. And, if any claimed absinthe was hurting his work, he would flash upon them any one of half a dozen short stories by Eagle. Eagle's work was improving: his style was less hurried, more musical, his subjects less bizarre, more probable, nearer life. "Don't look like it hurts *his* work, does it?" Winthrop would ask triumphantly. "And he takes it, one right after another." Sometimes he exhibited, more modestly, some newspaper "story" of his own written under the same influence. To balance its temporary felicity of expression his city editor could have shown you many written in dull, crabbed English, half the facts uninvestigated, as was plainly shown by numerous instances of "it is said," "it is rumored," and "we hear from good authority."

It was on the night of his discharge from the *Star* that he saw Anson Eagle, apparently unchanged since the year before: still clear of skin and eye, faintly

ruddy of cheek, erect, springy. Winthrop rejoiced; his own hereditary afflictions were facts then, else why was Eagle unaffected? He was not even careless of his dress: his pleated linen shirt, double cuffs and soft collar were as immaculate as his polished finger nails, his mane of black hair as shining from much brushing as ever. He swung a stick and whistled as he walked. Winthrop, made bold by a recent drink, hurried after and accosted him; and Eagle, finding his eager discipleship pleasing, consented to an adjournment to a nearby bar. He ordered lemon seltzer. Winthrop, amazed and hurt, mixed his absinthe silently.

"You drink that stuff?" asked Eagle. "Cut it out, my boy; it's rotten." Winthrop could restrain himself no longer. "But I saw *you*—" he began. "Experience—simply experience," returned Eagle. "How else can you learn? Absinthe helped me, and I quit it before it could hurt me." "And you don't drink *anything*?" asked Winthrop. Eagle winked. "I've found something that makes that look like a two-spot," he said. "No, I never drink any more. The two things don't go together."

"What two things?" asked Winthrop. "Drink," returned Eagle, "and"—he winked again—"something else. Look here," he said, "I'll show you if you like. You"—he surveyed the reporter, compassionately—"look like you're in a bad way from that rotten stuff. Don't touch it; come along with me."

Outside he hailed a hansom and gave an address in the upper forties. Winthrop thrilled. At last he was intimate with his hero. He looked anxiously to be sure the hero had no flaws; but, from his shining hair to shining boots, Eagle was scrupulously immaculate and smartly groomed. His slender figure, too, his curiously illumined, intelligent eyes, and his flow of satirical, iconoclastic conversation made him more Winthrop's king than ever: whatever he did was *right*.

He had not explained where they were going nor what they would do there. "Just keep your mouth shut and do what I do," he said, "and nobody'll know you're green." The car stopped

before a dark house in a dark crosstown block. Eagle pushed sharply three times the electric button beside the basement door. A Chinese opened the inner door, protected by an outer grill of iron-work, recognized Eagle, but hesitated at the sight of Winthrop. "Him all belong plover," said Eagle; "he puff with Hip Sing Tong men Dupont Street long time. My friend." The Chinese grunted and passed them. Eagle led the way along a basement hall divided by wooden compartments into little numbered rooms like bathhouses. An odorous smoke hung heavy over them all. "No private rooms for us," said Eagle; "too much fun in the big one."

At the end of the passage was a massive door with a Judas hole the slide of which went down at his knock. "Hello, Kid," said somebody, and admitted them. "The Four Hundred Kid," explained the somebody to another man who stood near, "Harry the Bee." Winthrop recognized in the man introduced the name of a notorious burglar, but Eagle shook hands, well pleased. He had forgotten Winthrop's name, so he presented him as "Jim Wilson," by which the underworld was to know Winthrop well. There were many others in the room besides the burglar and the doorman; a steady hum of conversation arose from them, as they lay, in couples, one on each side of a little lamp, a long bamboo pipe passing from one to the other. Each couple had a bunk, the bunks being built against the wall in tiers, upper and lower, like a Pullman sleeping car, but wider. Sometimes three or even four lay on one bunk, each head pillowed on the hip of him, or her, above him. The one on the upper right hand side was the "cook": scraping chocolate-colored stuff from a playing card, toasting it over the flame of the cottonseed oil lamps, kneading it on the clay pipebowl, then breaking it into little pills, each one being affixed to the bowl and drawn through it in the form of smoke. Winthrop, knowing this was opium, kept back a shudder with difficulty.

An individual in felt slippers and cotton-wadded pajamas arranged their

bunk, put down the tray holding the lighted lamp, and motioned them to the wall side. Winthrop choked over the first "pill" cooked for him, burning it, much to the "cook's" disgust; over the second, too; but with the others he was more successful, and, when he had cleansed his mouth of the taste by eating sliced oranges, lay back in a condition of joyous repose. He had neither dreams nor hallucinations; instead, he was extraordinarily sane; his body drugged, his mind seemed released from a clog and soared into immensity to meet Eagle's. The two fell into a metaphysical discussion, during which Winthrop found words to express all his doubts and fears and, in glad surprise, solutions, explanations. He felt an immense superiority to that dull workaday world that knew nothing of life's great secrets. It was as though, with Eagle, he lay like a god on a cloud, half pitying, half contemptuous of this sorry planet. Suddenly he realized why he had never got on with people: he was not of their kind; he was a Superman. Now, he knew, it was beneath him to mingle with their petty hates and strivings. Eternity was too near. Having ceased to care for the good will of these people, a dozen brilliant schemes came to his head by which he might outgeneral them and, through their stupidities, become rich. But he scorned to do so: perhaps . . . some day . . . maybe . . . if he felt like it . . .

Eagle, meanwhile, had closed his eyes and would speak no more. He dealt in no vague generalities. He was using his heightened faculties to work out some connected thoughts that would make a story. Presently he rose, and hastened home to write it before the sleepiness of the drugged should descend upon him.

But Winthrop still lay dreaming of a greatness he would never do anything to achieve.

IV

EAGLE encouraged Winthrop to write, and, as he must do something, he turned out some pretentious carelessly written impossibilities good only for the cheaper

grade of fiction magazines. To live decently by such work, he must produce in prodigious quantities, and this he was unwilling to do when he could lie in Sam Toy's big room dreaming or listening to amusing or interesting people. Sam Toy's was the inner heart of the city. Its frequenters knew the truth about everything: how millionaire Banks had really died; what the wife of young Edgar Pynsent, 3rd, had been before he married her; how the King of the Street had been fleeced at cards; what really happened behind Fifth Avenue doors, Broadway stage entrances and Wall Street cashiers' cages. These frequenters regarded life frankly as a battle; and here was their only bivouac. Not only crooks came: "burglars," "wire men," "match men," "lemon men"—the line was drawn at pickpockets and cadets—but famous "square" people: a "star" whose name glittered on Broadway, once an A. D. T. messenger; a theatrical magnate formerly a newsboy; the wife of a trust official, an ex-chorus girl; others, well known in the upper world. But here no attempt was made to rob or defraud them—this was a common refuge. A curious freemasonry existed among its frequenters; the "star," the magnate and the erstwhile chorus girl took the same pleasure in telling the truth about themselves as do peasants at confession.

Eagle drank in all details eagerly—he would never talk if he could listen; and so the explanation of many world famous mysteries became his. He found that he need be ashamed no longer of the double dealings to which he had been forced, to raise himself from poverty. Under the opium's lulling influence, his own story was repeated a hundred times, with only dates and names different. It was another strand in his philosophy of life. He would lie very still and try to connect it with others . . . never mind; it would come some day. A pretty showgirl, entering, yawning over the memory of a supper party with rich bankers, would exhibit a fifty-dollar bill such as each girl had found under her plate. And some banker, probably, had a sore heart because she would not let him escort her home. . . . That was

life. He strove to understand it. . . . On another side of him was a quiet-voiced young fellow who had served three years for stealing a watch; while, down in Wall Street today, the promoters of worthless mining stock or building lots could steal hundreds of thousands of the savings of shopgirls and washerwomen and never do a day. Life again. Why? Could one *ever* understand it? . . . But sometimes he had a gleam, and hurried home to write it down.

People were asking themselves the same questions all over America. "Rot-ten colonel, rotten regiment," say army men; and as money colonels were thieves, thievery had come to be regarded either lightly, or as retaliation or defense. It seemed only the latter to the indignant Winthrop, writing his daily thousands of worthless words to please haberdashers and milkmen: words that ignored all great realities and pretended America was the greatest country on earth and Americans the cleverest, noblest, bravest and most magnanimous. Winthrop's heart sickened at the task, but he never thought to aspire to a style in which he could disguise the truth, as Eagle did. So he waded on through his morass of sentimentality and spreadeagleism: and, just as weak people read his stories to drug themselves into unconsciousness of actual evil, so Winthrop sought a stronger drug. He was a giant in repose, a pigmy in action; consequently his moments of repose lengthened at the expense of his livelihood. There came a time when he was ashamed to ask Eagle for further loans, and soon he had enlisted in the army of actual rebellion: assistant to a "scratch man," a person who raises small cheques and banknotes. These Winthrop cashed or passed, his gentlemanly appearance his invaluable asset.

But it is doubtful whether or not Winthrop would ever have had the initiative to become a crook had Eagle not already succumbed to temptation. The novelist had come to a point in his literary career where he was no longer willing to compromise; where he objected to deleting from his stories, for the benefit

of hypocritical, squeamish or ignorant readers, certain aspects of life that seemed to him important, that he believed the public should know. Eagle thought he had arrived at a solution of life's cruelties and was eager to impart it to the growing number of those who followed his work, but, when he wrote along these lines, the editors lectured him severely and bade him return to the style proven tried and true. In a series of bitterly denunciatory scenes, Eagle swore he would write no more until he could write his own way. He flamed into open rebellion long before Winthrop, but for a far different reason.

In his new state of mind, he had stated openly to his friends at Sam Toy's that it was the duty of anyone with an ounce of spirit to urge the people generally to play the same game the capitalists were playing; showing them the anarchy that would result were everyone as dishonest, unscrupulous and heartless as they. There were certain "wire men," alternating high class black-mailing with their "phony" poolrooms, who were very happy to hear this from Eagle. Often he had helped them solve knotty problems by purely psychological methods of reasoning, and they envied literature the possession of his clear head and unusual brain. And, although they were practical business men, untouched by anarchical or socialistic sentiments, they found it convenient to assume all the theories of the indignant young sociologist. Night after night Eagle talked at Sam Toy's; night after night they listened and approved. Then, like a flower, from bud to blossom, they allowed to grow before him a scheme which, in magnitude, did justice to Eagle's desire for reprisal: a scheme that had slumbered in the brain of "Dude" Horan for years, because it necessitated the coöperation of someone free of police suspicion, someone who had access to a higher grade of society than that in which the Dude's intimates were comfortable. Eagle was just the man.

It was not a pretty scheme, nor in the least romantic, so its details shall not be given here; but it was masterly: its

conclusion being that a certain power in the Street was to find himself in a cellar, there to remain for ransom—or so they told Eagle. As a matter of fact, the tribute exacted, the hostage was to be eliminated to avoid the chance of speedy retribution once he was free. . . . Such bloodthirstiness in men is awakened only for adequate reasons; the crook is the most sentimental of men, and that very sentimentality had been outraged in this case: babies had died for want of the ice that would have been theirs had not "he" raised the price.

Eagle was the link connecting the upper and under worlds: for other accomplices must be obtained: an actress, a taxi driver, a showgirl, a hotel clerk, a stenographer—many more. Eagle obtained them. All went without a hitch until the very day, when "he" went to play golf. Then the thunderbolt. There had been a Judas in their midst.

Eagle, alone of all the conspirators, was released on bail because at that time he was regarded as more sinned against than sinning; and, while this state of mind existed among the district attorneys, he fled to France and hid himself in the heart of the Pyrenees, his bondsman, an admirer, giving permission. And for many years the world heard no more of Anson Eagle.

V

MEANWHILE Winthrop pursued his less spectacular career. Perhaps all would have gone well enough had ambition slumbered; but Winthrop had little to do save spend a few hours in shops and banks, leaving more time for Sam Toy's and his dreams. Eagle's arrest and flight were triumphs in Winthrop's eyes; quotations from his writings appeared in the newspapers, and those inclined to Socialism disguised their sympathy but thinly, the Socialist organs openly approving. Two months later, a trust promoter's child was kidnapped, and Eagle's name was whispered as behind it. Romantic pictures of him and his possible band, hiding somewhere subterraneously, filled Sunday supplements.

Winthrop's heart leaped high as he read these fallacious tales written by highly paid "feature men" but signed with the names of well known criminals; and he would lie around the layout by the hour working out subtle schemes to achieve Eagle's eminence. Winthrop saw in him, at one time, the soul of a Martin Luther or a John Knox allied with the exploits of a Francis Drake or a Robin Hood; but, worst of all, he still saw Eagle only as his own avatar, the man he himself could be if he chose to exert himself. So he began to talk brilliantly, too, as he had heard Eagle talk, and in that assembly of lawless ones it was not long before he found followers for another plot against a plutocrat's peace. But he was no Eagle for advice, and he had no Horan for execution. It was not necessary for a traitor to betray this sorry scheme; it betrayed itself by slipshod carelessness.

Nor, in any way, did the trial for conspiracy of Winthrop and his accomplices resemble even slightly that of his hero's. Again lacking an Eagle, or even a Horan, to flavor it with Sunday supplement romance, it went briefly recorded as a commonplace crime; so the judge was not moved by public opinion to consider charging the jury with reasonable doubt; and the jury saw in the accused company not possible champions of the proletariat but ordinary "blackhanders." The sentences were heavy; and Winthrop was hustled away to ugly gray clothes and high gray stone walls.

VI

AT that time, Eagle, roughly clad but hale and hearty, bronzed and ruddy, was breasting the snow of the mountains; and as he climbed he sang. There was nothing about him to suggest the man of the world, the *boulevardier*, not even a cynical droop of the eye. He had lived in these mountains for a year now. As he had listened to the stories of criminals' lives, now he listened to peasants' tales of another kind of underworld, abandoning himself to mystical fancies. He was as a child again among

these simple folk. In his little mountain hut, on bookshelves that he had built himself, were the works of the master mystics, modern and medieval. He read now with the eyes of the spirit, and was astounded to find he had never really read before. Perhaps, had his money lasted, he would not have written again; but even a simple life costs, so he began a novel. So long free of civilization's standards, so long removed from the taint of cities, his work was as that of another man; and each evening when he read in the dusk the work of the day he was amazed. His mysticism had crystallized life, and explained what had been its inconsistencies; so he dealt no longer in detached incidents but in those that were the keys of the mystery. He saw humanity, one great troubled giant, clumsy, ignorant, sad and helpless, reaching out with a hundred hands ever after an ideal and finding false ones to worship fiercely. He saw it in a thicket of thorns, struggling wildly to be free, thrashing out with its hundred arms, not knowing that living creatures fell dead from its blows. He heard it, crying, like a lost child, upon the Hill of Golgotha, crying for God, its father, whom it could not find.

VII

So all that he had sought to know was revealed to him; and the book, begun for money, was finished for love. In it were men of all kinds among whom his life had been led; he wrote them down as he had known them, but, also, he looked into their hearts for what had made them so, and, finding that those hearts were very much as was his own, attacked no men but only conditions and creeds. His experiences had not been wasted: he knew how one man felt under absinthe, another under opium, a third under the braggadocio influence of false heroism, a fourth under the sway of sex. Suddenly he perceived that he had been Everyman; he was no longer ashamed he had sinned, since he might help a million weaklings who never would have found their way to the

Delectable Mountains had such as he not made maps of gins and pitfalls. He had lived to save others; himself alone he could not save.

When the book was finished and he had stumbled along many weary miles to send it safely to his agent, starvation and cold had not left him the strength to regain his mountains, and he raved in delirium, at the foot of them, in a kindly peasant's hut. When he recovered, he worked in the fields and chopped wood in return for his host's attendance during his illness.

VIII

His book was refused by all the leading London publishers; finally, in despair, his literary agent gave it to a young disciple of William Morris who wanted text which would fit in with the medieval beauty of his specially designed founts and Preraphaelite illustrations. The fact that it sold by subscription only, at a guinea the volume, compelled the press to take it seriously. So Eagle, under his pseudonym, got pages in weekly periodicals, double columns in dailies; and soon the booksellers demanded a trade price edition; they were tired of denying customers who demanded it. Philanthropists, literary guilds and society women made the book the subject of discussions, essays and debates; and Socialists and suffragists used its teachings as propaganda. With the American reprints, many editions were exhausted, not as many as a "best seller," to be true, but sufficient to reach all the intelligent people in the English-speaking world: less than a hundred thousand. It was read alike in the church and the disorderly house; in editorial rooms and boarding schools. For it had not been written by one who had bought his seat at the Theater of Life and therefore knew nothing of what happens beyond the stage door, but by one who had lived behind the scenes; and therefore it had a message for everyone. In it one who understood might have discovered the secret of the difference between Eagle and Winthrop: without knowing it, Eagle had been fighting for

others all his life, Winthrop only for himself.

IX

ONE day the Chinese at Sam Toy's slammed the iron door in Winthrop's face. Since his release from Sing Sing, he had taxed the patience of its frequenters. He had not dared break laws again with the menace of that horrible prison life behind each dereliction; so, lacking money, he had slept around any layout where he happened to be, and borrowed the money for his food. Had he possessed a more pleasing temper, doubtless, as reward for running errands for fruit, cigarettes and reading matter, the good-natured crooks and their friends would have supported him interminably; but his opinion of his importance had undergone no change. He alternated between whining for loans and asserting his dignity: he would compare himself, his birth, education and breeding with those who lacked all three, and he would work himself up into insensate rages against capitalism whenever he read the newspapers, annoying everyone in the room, for in such places they like to lie quietly, forgetting travail in perfect tomorrows. He quarreled with everyone, sneering at innocent boasts and discounting tall tales, moreover suspecting insults in every unintentional ambiguity. So finally Sam Toy had tired of him; his door never opened to Winthrop again.

For some little while the former reporter, suddenly realizing his degradation, made an earnest effort to take himself in hand. He found a former friend who gave him a place to sleep and some cast-off clothes, tolerably presentable; who got him work at the City News office, where assignments at two dollars each are given out twice a day. But to suffer careless treatment at the hands of people of whose intelligence he was contemptuous, to take their orders; to endure the insults of those in the news, infuriated with reporters who distorted personal misfortunes into spicy scandal: all this was too much for one who gave himself the stature of the Napoleon of

his dreams. Then, too, he must often work twelve hours for four dollars, in all sorts of inclement weather, on nights freezingly cold.

So he dropped out after a few weeks, and tried to write fiction again; but the only style he had ever troubled to acquire was too journalistic for the weighty things he wanted to say; besides, he was a monomaniac, hating all prosperous people.

His money gave out; he was evicted; and sank, sank, sank, until he could sink no lower. But he did not realize how low it was: he knew only that he ate, smoked and did not work. . . . Then one day, after many months of slothful living in an overheated Tenderloin apartment, seldom leaving the bunk, a bitter quarrel, which had waged for weeks between him and his companion, had its culmination in a fallen body on the floor, a stream of blood across its forehead. . . .

Winthrop fled into the snowy streets; he shivered at the sight of the nearest policeman. A vision came of gray stone walls, horrible scratchy gray suits, iron bars between him and the sun. . . . At any time a heavy hand might fall on his shoulder; in another day, at most, someone would be sure to force open the door of the apartment and see what lay there so quietly.

He hurriedly registered at the nearest hotel, a cheap one. Then it occurred to him that it might not be death back there. . . . He was elated—until his gaze met the greasy wallpaper of the hotel bedroom, his nose became conscious of the smelly mattress—and outside the snow was falling. . . . His choice lay between those cold streets, the only place he could earn a living—for he knew now he was fit to be an underpaid reporter or nothing; and in reward for his labors just such a room as this—this the end of his dreams of honor and power. Not even the comfort of the flat he had just left, the leisure, the good food, to which he could never go back. "Oh, Dolly, I didn't mean to do it!" he sobbed wildly. But he was not sobbing for the girl but for

himself: her death did not hang heavy on his soul—only the punishment it brought him. Always it was Winthrop, the hero of the great play in the Theater of Life; and because the universe would not revolve about him, how sorry was the universe! . . . Always himself.

X

UP the mountains toiled a party of pilgrims bearing a pardon to Anson Eagle. Powerful people had read his book, and their glowing appreciation had encouraged his agent to confide to some the author's secret. They would see it was all a mistake, and should not such a stain be removed from his name so that he could return to his own country and be honored, feted, an ornament at rich women's house parties and dinners, a newspaper hero once more? It had not been necessary to bring much pressure to bear on the District Attorney after he, too, had read the book. "If the gentleman will return and plead 'guilty'—a suspended sentence can be arranged." It was a nominal term for absolute pardon, he wrote almost apologetically. But as a matter of form . . .

They had journeyed hastily to take him home, his agent, his English and American publishers, the special representative of a chain of sensational news-

papers, an Associated Press correspondent and a moving picture magnate.

Eagle gave them bread and mountain cheese and milk. He was surrounded by books and stacks of manuscript, and was dressed as peasants are. He seemed quite unaffected by their praise and by the prospect of his pardon.

"No," he said, "my books mustn't bear the handicap of my name. They weren't written by Anson Eagle. Their author was born up here." He waved to the mountain tops affectionately. "Why should I go to New York? I'd only be unhappy there, surrounded by misery I can't prevent, helpless with anger at outrages I couldn't stop. I'd be an anarchist again. You'll always get the best of me in my books. Let me stay here and have a little happiness with the best companions of four thousand years"—he nodded lovingly toward his books—"and with work, much work. Why, if I wrote from now on steadily until I died I shouldn't have written half I've learned myself or a thousandth of what Someone Else has taught me—*up here.*"

He seemed always to speak of the mountains as men speak of beloved and sacred things. "Thank God!" he finished.

At that same moment, Asa Winthrop shot himself through the heart.



THE plot of the modern musical show hinges on the fact that women have two legs.



AMERICAN—One who thinks he can sing.



WHEN a woman becomes an expert in love, she may continue to inspire it, but her own interest in it is forever dead.

AN OLD HOUSE

By Samuel McCoy

THIS is that house where once
Four daughters were;
Now the quick spider hunts
Its dusty stair.

Here, in the summer night,
While the moon shone,
From lip to lip the light
Laughter was thrown.

Here, when the winter storm
Howled round about,
The hearth logs blazed warm
On the gay rout.

Music and bright parades
Of silken dances;
Old jests, and wild charades,
And merry glances.

Here the warm summer moon,
With longing laden,
Hallowed the nights of June,
While youth and maiden

Lounged on the velvet lawn
And whispered low;
Now all its life is gone,
And shadows go

Through all its dusty halls,
Empty and lonely;
And all its tottering walls
Speak memories only.



REMORSE—Regret that one didn't do it sooner.

TABLIER BLANC

Par H. A. Dourliac

C'EST que me rappelle ce tablier de femme de chambre? dit le professeur Bernon, avec une ombre de mélancolie, c'est une des plus profondes émotions de ma vie.

J'avais été élevé par une mère veuve, mais sans faiblesse, qui avait pris le gouvernail échappé de la main paternelle et avait dirigé notre pauvre barque, au milieu des écueils, de façon à l'amener au port, c'est-à-dire à mon doctorat, objet de son ambition et de la mienne.

Pour en arriver là, il avait fallu trimer dur tous les deux, se priver de tous plaisirs et se serrer parfois le ventre; mais j'aurais eu mauvaise grâce à me plaindre, bien que la jeunesse fut sujette aux fringales de toutes les manières, car ma mère me donnait l'exemple.

Elle descendait, par les femmes, d'une de ces vaillantes émigrées qui, payant de leur personne, avaient tenu tête à l'adversité et elle ne devait pas faillir à ses origines.

Jeune encore quand elle avait été frappée par le deuil et la ruine, elle avait renoncé à toute coquetterie, rompu toutes relations, pour se consacrer exclusivement à son fils, à son éducation, à son avenir, luttant, peinant sans relâche, pâlisant sur des travaux de copiste, se pliant aux plus grossières besognes pour économiser une servante, mais sans perdre jamais son air de dignité qui éloignait toute familiarité et en imposait à tout le monde, à commencer par moi.

Je la vois encore avec ses bandeaux bien lisses, sa robe de mérinos, dont la coupe ne changeait guère plus que la couleur, et son tablier de soie noire, sa seule élégance, affirmation de son rang, de sa caste, et que, même dans le mystère de sa cuisine, elle n'eût jamais consenti

à troquer contre un vulgaire tablier bleu.

Ses traits rigides reflétaient son caractère, incarnation du devoir dans toute son austérité, où j'eus souhaité parfois plus de douceur et d'abandon.

Mais elle était de cette vieille école hiérarchique qui considérait le respect comme la clef de voûte de la famille et de l'Etat; elle n'admettait pas certaines privautés de manière et de langage; je ne la tutoyais pas et ne l'embrassais que matin et soir, sans aucune de ces effusions tendres, de ces câlineries puériles qui eussent tempéré un peu cette existence spartiate. Bref, elle me soignait admirablement, mais elle ne me dorlotait pas.

— Une mère ne doit pas être la servante de ses enfants, déclarait-elle nettement devant certaines abdications maternelles.

Je me le tenais pour dit.

Le matin, avant de partir au collège, je cirais mes souliers, je brossais mes habits, je faisais mon lit; et le soir, en rentrant, je devais monter le charbon, ce qui humiliait fort ma jeune vanité.

Avec les années, j'appréciais de moins en moins ce régime où abstinence rimait avec continence; mais je ne m'en portait pas plus mal et mes ardeurs refoulées profitaient à mes études; je travaillais avec rage faute de mieux!... ce qui ne m'empêchait pas d'envier tout bas les camarades plus favorisés qui pouvaient émailler les cours d'examen de séances à Bullier ou ailleurs, nécessaires aussi à l'éducation d'un étudiant.

Mais ce n'était pas l'avis de ma mère.

— On doit mesurer ses plaisirs à sa bourse.

Et elle m'octroyait généreusement

une menue pièce blanche de temps en temps.

Si elle eut entendu son fils lui demander un louis, elle lui eut prêté l'échafaud.

Au reste, je n'ai jamais eu la folle témérité de réclamer contre ce régime sévère; mais je lui en voulais un peu de me l'imposer, méconnaissant ses propres sacrifices.

Étaient-ils si grands après tout? Elle aimait peu le monde, la toilette, le théâtre, c'était peut-être son plaisir de se confiner dans son rôle de ménagère étroite et timorée, tandis que pour un garçon de mon âge, à l'esprit large, aux idées et à la main ouverte, c'était un véritable supplice!

De là à me considérer comme une victime!

* * *

Cependant quand, mes examens terminés, il s'agit de s'établir, et que, pour la première fois, ma mère me mit en face de notre maigre budget, je fus stupéfait et épouvanté.

Comment suffire aux frais d'installation, de représentation?

— J'ai économisé une petite réserve en prévision de ce moment, dit simplement ma mère, nous ne ferons que le strict nécessaire, mais tu auras un cabinet convenable.

En effet, elle ne lésina pas à cet égard et me fit meubler trois pièces très gentilles, salon d'attente bureau, cabinet de consultation, desservies par un couloir assez sombre aboutissant à l'antichambre dont il était séparé par une portière relevée. (Ces détails ne sont pas inutiles.) Le mobilier était d'un goût sobre et élégant, quelques plantes vertes, un ou deux plâtres, de jolis vitraux y mêlaient une note gaie, artistique et moderne; les fauteuils étaient confortables et le divan, contenant toute une literie, transformait à volonté mon bureau en chambre à coucher. Ma mère ne s'était réservé qu'une véritable cellule sur le derrière, à côté de la cuisine et de la petite salle à manger, où elle travaillait à ses copies en attendant les coups de sonnettes.

Car, hélas! c'était toujours elle qui allait ouvrir, et cela suffisait à empoisonner ma joie.

Ce n'était pas, je l'avoue à ma honte, un sentiment de respect filial, mais de respect humain; j'étais humilié, furieux, de n'avoir ni groom, ni servante, comme mes plus modestes confrères, et j'avais épuisé tous les arguments pour convaincre ma mère de cette nécessité absolue, mais en vain.

— C'est une dépense au dessus de nos moyens pour le moment.

J'insinuais que l'on pourrait louer à peu de frais le frotteur du second, qui se tiendrait dans l'antichambre à mes heures de consultation.

— Pour que toute la maison se moque de nous? Non, mieux vaut faire ses affaires soi-mêmes.

Avec elle, non c'était non; et je dus me résigner de très mauvaise grâce, un peu consolé par cette pensée vengeresse et assez basse, qu'au fond elle devait en souffrir autant que moi, étant donné son caractère.

* * *

La clientèle venait tout doucement, envoyée par mon bon maître Valadé, ... une clientèle très chic ... mais ne payant guère comptant, et à laquelle il eut été peu séant d'envoyer sa note. Aussi, j'étais bien forcé de reconnaître la prudence maternelle. Comment aurions-nous payé et nourri une bonne quand la chère était si maigre?

— Tu te rattraperas en faisant de bons dîners lorsque tu seras membre de l'Institut! disait ma mère avec philosophie.

J'aurais bien voulu escompter un peu cette célébrité future.

Un jour une délicieuse petite comtesse, — vive, enjouée, spirituelle, qui se croyait toutes les maladies et qui détestait attendre — me dit en riant:

— Mes compliments, docteur, vous avez un vrai Cèrberè ... et incorruptible! ... J'ai voulu mettre cent sous dans la main de votre femme de chambre pour obtenir un tour de faveur ... (ça se fait partout), et elle m'a répondu très digne:

— Impossible, madame, Monsieur me le défend!

— Ma femme de chambre?

— Monsieur?

J'ouvris la bouche pour protester,

quelque chose m'arrêta qui, cette fois, n'était pas de la fausse honte, et, à la fin de la visite au lieu de me borner à ouvrir la porte de mon cabinet, je reconduisis ma jolie cliente au milieu du couloir et je restai caché dans l'ombre.

Ma mère venait d'apparaître, en TABLIER BLANC.

— Vous savez, dit gentiment la petite comtesse, j'ai fait votre éloge à votre maître, vous aurez un bon point.

Ma mère ne sourcilla pas, mais la porte refermée, elle me vit devant elle, si bouleversé, si ému, que je ne pouvais parler.

Plus que son long dévouement, ses sacrifices de chaque jour, cette humilia-

tion volontaire me donnait la mesure de sa tendresse...

Pour moi, elle avait fait litière de ses fiertés et nulle abdication ne devait lui être plus sensible.

Aussi, attendri jusqu'aux larmes, je pris le coin de l'humble tablier et le baisai en murmurant:

— Pardon, maman!

Jusques-là, je l'avais toujours appelée: "Ma mère."

Elle comprit sans doute ce qui se passait en moi.

— Tu ne croyais donc pas que je t'aimais, dit-elle avec un léger reproche.

Et je répondis avec conviction:

— Pas tant que cela!



NAPLES

Par Charmy

CONNAIT-ON site plus joli
Que la riante Napoli
Si blanche en la lumière blonde
Et que l'azur foncé de l'onde
Miroitant sous le soleil d'or
Semble rendre plus blanche encor?

Le regard s'émerveille
De la lueur vermeille
Eclairant la cité,
Naples, charmeuse ville
Qui s'étage, tranquille
Devant l'immensité.

Au fond de l'horizon lointain
Sur le golfe napolitain
Quand on voit le soleil descendre,
Pâle et bleu, le soir vient s'étendre
Ainsi qu'un manteau de velours
Sur la ville et sur les faubourgs.

Il n'est pas sous la brise
De cité plus exquise
D'Otrante à Potenza;
On dirait une perle
Que le flot qui déferle
Sur le sable posa.

RAIN I' THE NIGHT

By John Vance Cheney

ON the old low roof the stroke of the rain!
Yea, lady, but ah, you hear not aright;
You hear the quick hurt, the prick of the pain,
Not little black hammers, nailing the night.
Lady, lady, too white i' the face,
Not the rain, not the wind,
Put the past out of mind;
And God, who remembers, give you grace!

Yea, the shower caresses roof and roof-tree,
With the touch of a lover, long away;
Oh, lady, you list to dim melody
Sung by the dreams on the grave of a day.

Not the drop on the roof, not the knock of the rain,
Your heart, your own throbbing heart, you hear,
The while you have it, live it, again,
His day, *your* day, dead twenty year.
Lady, lady, too white i' the face,
So will run love's way
And the world grow gray:
And God, who well knows it, give you grace!



LEST I LEARN

By Witter Bynner

LEST I learn, with clearer sight,
Such beauty cannot be—
Tie a bandage, pull it tight,
Blind me, I would not see!

Lest I learn, with clearer will,
Such wonder cannot be—
Oh, kiss me nearer, nearer still,
And make a fool of me!

THE DRAMA IN THE CAPITALS OF EUROPE

By George Jean Nathan

A PLAY by George A. Birmingham called "GENERAL JOHN REGAN," displayed in London, is—at the time of this writing—the best new play to be observed on any of the European stages. Not only this, but it is, so far as the British drama of the immediate era goes, the best piece of satire that George Bernard Shaw hasn't written. Being a very good play (and, quite incidentally, a certified practical play so far as box office standards are concerned), it laughs, at every turn, at the vehement technical injunctions of solemn professors of playwriting, at the irrefragable requirements of a successful play as emphatically announced on every possible occasion by theatrical managers and at all such similar purely bogus oratory that, in the mass, has contrived so sweetly in abashing any latent originality, power and wit in the Anglo-Saxon drama.

Here is a play, as successful financially as it has been artistically, that

1. Is as "talky" as a play can possibly be.
2. Is utterly devoid of "action" (almost the entire second act, for example, consists of a more or less apathetic conversation on the part of four men seated at a table).
3. Is written in a nonchalant tempo, there being no crescendo movement, no "climaxes," no carefully planned fortissimo curtain lines.
4. Is absolutely devoid of what is called "love interest" or "heart interest."
5. Is, finally, without what have been termed the three "S-entials" of a good play—sympathy, surprise and suspense.

But, you tell me, this play is unquestionably only an exception to the rule: one of those "it just so happened" successes. And, enormously pleased with this mental maneuver, you proceed to

reinsert your august nose into the pages of such vellum-covered wisdom as informs you, among some one hundred odd other imperative and equally sage "rules for playwriting," that "every play must have a beginning, a middle and an end." As generally put into practice, the latter important rule (aided and abetted by the others) usually gives birth to a drama of the following incendiary nature:

THE BEGINNING

PITT (*the butler*): There's a lady outside to see you, sir.

CECIL HARMSWORTH: A lady? Who is it?

PITT: She wouldn't give me her name, sir—just said as how you'd know well enough who it was, sir.

HARMSWORTH (*biting his under lip and glancing at his watch*): Damn! And Eleanor coming to tea in half an hour!

THE MIDDLE

HARMSWORTH: And now, go! Please!

VIOLET VERLAINE: You expect someone, then? . . . Ah, I see it all now. I see it all! You're ashamed of me! I'm not good enough for you any more!

HARMSWORTH (*with chivalrous remonstrance*): You know that's not true, Vi.

VIOLET (*passionately, and melting into tears*): That's it! You're ashamed of me!

HARMSWORTH (*glancing at his watch nervously*): Believe me, Vi, I'm not. But go—I beg of you!

VIOLET (*drying her eyes*): Very well, I'll go; but kiss me just once again, Cecil, before I leave you—forever.

(HARMSWORTH, after another desperate glance at his watch, shrugs his shoulders, goes to VIOLET, puts his arm about her and kisses her, when—
Enter ELEANOR, L. C.)

THE END

HARMSWORTH (*tenderly folding ELEANOR in his embrace*): Are you happy, my darling?

ELEANOR (*burying her head on his chest, with a little sigh*): Oh, Cecil, so happy!

CURTAIN

"REGAN" is a good play, not, to be sure, merely because it violates almost the entire file of standard playwriting commandments—that were an absurd contention; as wholly absurd, indeed, as the contention that a play is a good play because it does not violate a single technical rule—but because its wholesale transgression proves itself to be the deliberate work of a writer who deliberately realizes that rules of any kind and for anything amount to nothing more than an indication of the limit of the intellectual elasticity of the one individual who, up to the moment, has proved himself to be more imaginative and resourceful than the rule-making individual who directly preceded him. This Birmingham fellow, like the Briton of whose writings he has evidently been a close observer, sees, like any other sensible theatrical scrivener:

1. That a play may be as "talky" as it cares to be, just so long as its talk concerns itself with something more interesting than a flabby elocutionary tussle with philosophical platitudes, sex latitude, pseudo-socialistic attitude or one of the other conventional theatrical tudes.

2. That there is fifty times more real "action" invested in the tongue than in the legs and arms. Richard Harding Davis: John Galsworthy:: 1: 50. Q. E. D.

3. That the actual drama of life is played pianissimo; that only the insane, the soused and the clergy—and Polacks—are given to the fortissimo; that betrayed husbands, embezzled virtue, great grief, great joy, death, birth, life—all these play themselves *pp*; that, in the world of humans, the only climaxes are anti-climaxes and silent, ever mental, never physical. (The climax of a great and bloody war between ten, twenty, fifty thousands of yelling devils is just a little piece of paper to which two quiet men have quietly subscribed their names.)

4. That "love interest" and "heart interest" in a play are less imperative than "head interest"; that the current belief that theatergoers may be interested only by the spectacle of Cecil and Eleanor coquetting toward an osculatory encounter is on a par with the academician belief that all theatergoers may not one hundred times out of every one hundred be made to roll with mirth in the hearing of a song that substitutes in its lyric some such word as "well" where they have been led to believe the rhyme would be completed with "hell."

5. And that an intellectual sympathy may be as stimulating as that hybrid thing called

"sympathy" that generically is maintained by most theatrical purveyors to attach itself only to deceived ladies, to little girls (preferably blind) whose stepmothers treat them unkindly, to wives whose husbands devote a great deal of their time to their business affairs, and to daughters whose ambitious mothers wish them to marry money (personified by roués twenty-five years the daughters' senior) when their hearts are clearly the property of Julian L'Estrange. Also that "surprise" may possibly mean something else than the unexpected return of a suspicious husband who has purposely missed his train to Erie, Pa.; and that "suspense" may possibly take some other form than a nervous doubt on the part of the audience as to how Nevil Trepswick will, in the next act, explain to Sir Arthur Drysdale the compromising presence of Lady Alicia Drysdale in his apartments in Adelphi Terrace the preceding night.

The Birmingham play is no finished, flawless work of the first water, as one might be led to suspect from my prefatory benediction. But, as it stands, with all its faults and with all its virtues, it still impresses me as the newest, the most hopeful and the most subtly persuasive piece of writing made visible in the current theaters of London, Berlin, Vienna and Paris. Its satirical tale is simply this:

An American tourist's automobile breaks down in a little dormant Irish village, and the American, confronted with the grisly likelihood of having to remain in that soul-shriveling dump for several days, casts about him to stir up a bit of excitement. To the latter end, after inhaling four or five whiskies, he invents a famous Irish soldier—General John Regan, he names him—and proceeds forthwith to demand of the natives why they have never seen fit to honor in any way their greatest national hero. By playing upon the ever-uncorked Hibernian fund of patriotism, the American presently has the whole community seething with a righteous indignation because, in all Ireland, there is not a single statue to the noble general who, incidentally (as imagination gets under way), was born in this very village! The proud villagers presently begin pointing out the house in which the celebrated hero was born, the place where he went to school—and there are even one or two of the older men who remember him distinctly! And so it

goes. Funds are gathered and, with a representative of the Lord Lieutenant (and through him, the Government) on the scene, a statue of the great Regan is unveiled. When the cheering and flower throwing and music have stopped, one little Irishman timidly approaches the American. "Now," he whispers, "I know ahl right enough that Ginral Jawn Ragan was a grrreat mon—indade, he was Oireland's grrreatest mon; but, but wud yez moind tellin' me what he ivver did?"

"What he did! What he did!" yells the American, with a fine show of mingled surprise and indignation at the man's stupidity. "Why, it was he who was the savior of Bolivia!"

And by this time everybody is so excited over the new statue that not even this amazing new disclosure, nor the subsequent even more amazing one that there never was a General John Regan, matters in the least. "Because, anyway," the bland American reassures the villagers, "you've got a nice statue and that's something. The idea is there back of it just the same, and, in any statue of any man—real or imaginary—that's all that counts."

The only other play of comparative merit that I have sat before in London is Arnold Bennett's "THE GREAT ADVENTURE," gleaned from his tale "Buried Alive" and done admirably at the Kingsway by Henry Ainley and Wish Wynne. Bennett, by divesting himself of the deadly precision and clerklike bound-by-rule-ishness that so generally have breathed their somniferous gases into his work, has turned out an amusing little fable of an adulated and bashful artistic genius who permits his late valet to be buried as himself and who thenceforth proceeds to live his life as any ordinary human. What is more, the author has written into his play two characters—the artist and the matter-of-fact girl who answers his valet's "object, matrimony" advertisement and whom the artist himself marries—that are genuine achievements of the dramatist hand. Indeed, of all the written heroines I have lately seen in the theater, commend me to this same Janet

Cannot, with her magnificent practicability, with her commonplace yet serviceable womanliness, with her hard common sense in the stead of the usual stage simperings and labial yearnings. So much of good is there in the play. As for what is less good, we observe the stratagem of labeling the piece "a play of fancy" to conceal, it may or may not be, such slapdash playwriting—to make one example serve for many—as is witnessed in the exit of Dr. Pascoe in the first act—"I'll run round to the surgery and get my hypodermic"—and the Doctor's return in just twenty-seven seconds of actual playing time. And, too, Bennett's palpable but vain essay to be another Britishly ironic Shaw, as evinced in numerous puny dialogic attempts. This infelicitous effort to duplicate the gbs method and attitude is to be deplored in the present instance because, for some, it will remove the edge from much of the very genuine and spontaneous humor with which Mr. Bennett has invested his piece.

* * *

Marcelle de Ligneray deserts the wealthy Comte Sorbier for the poor young Moe-rees Darcet "because great wealth and great love are ever incapable of coexistence." At this point the curtain marks off Act I of the much-moneyed Henri de Rothschild's piece "CROESUS," at the Garrick. The wealthy Comte Sorbier, after sagely and wittily repeating for the sixth time that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of love," has a silent little cry, goes to a safe that "contains his greatest treasure," opens it, takes out a suit of cheap clothes, divests himself of his opulent caparisons, dons the dowdy habilimenta and, with an incog. smile to indicate that now is he at peace with the world, exits R. U. E. At this point the curtain marks off Act II of Henri's *chef d'œuvre*. What happens after this I shall never know. Probably the noble Comte sets Moe-rees up in trade. Probably, after pressing to his lips the faded rose that the faithless Marcelle has left behind, he

leaves Paris forever to dream away his empty days somewhere along the sun-smiling Mediterranean. Or probably he climbs back into his good suit again and sets about campaigning for a successor to the beauteous but deceitful chicken. Maybe; maybe no. Henri is about the most melancholy wit I have engaged with in years. Judging him and his talents from his attempt at playwriting, he would seem to be so completely without humor, so completely without a knowledge of humanity in the large, so completely without the mellowing blessing of life lived, that one is grateful to a kind and just Providence for having given him so much money in an effort halfway to equalize things.

At St. James's, "OPEN WINDOWS," by A. E. W. Mason. Some forty thousand words of moist manuscript having to do with the amazing discovery at a late hour on the part of one John Herrick (who bears the brunt of the great problems and burdens of the British Empire) that "when a man and a woman love deeply, *nothing, NOTHING, NOTHING* can separate them." Scented walla-walla affording the suave Sir George Alexander one of his celebrated opportunities to wear a dress suit with provoking nonchalance, seat himself at a writing table under an amber lamp and look so sad, and forgive Irene Vanbrugh or some other lady in the last act for her trespasses. The play is preceded by Pinero's "PLAYGOERS"—"a domestic episode," as it is called on the program—a crude and lowly and very deadly vaudevillism at no point approaching in wit or execution even such sketches as bear the name of Will M. Cressy. The humor consists principally of references to a servant named Gale as Wind, Typhoon, Breeze, Zephyr, etc. At the Criterion, we encounter H. V. Esmond's "ELIZA COMES TO STAY," an antique Sis-Hopkins, Peg-o'-My-Heart chowchow served up for the 1913 market. Despite Esmond's graceful writing and a happy scene or two, the piece as a whole proves spiceless stuff.

* * *

The finest instance of ensemble acting in Europe, and the most intelligent

staging of a play, are to be appreciated at the Kleines Theater in Berlin through the medium of Schnitzler's *aufführung-in-Wien-verbotenes* wind-drama, "PROFESSOR BERNHARDI," in which a polysyllabic tornado howls its wordy way through five acts only to bring up, in the end, at the same argumentative point where it started. A rough English translation of the scene at the close of the initial act will afford the moot point sense of the piece. The scene is a hospital. In a room beyond a young girl lies dying.

BERNHARDI (a Jew)

There is no hope for her recovery—of that there is no doubt. You will pardon me, Your Reverence, but I am still here in my capacity as physician. And, as such, it is my duty—above all else—to make death, where death must come, as easy as possible.

RECTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY FLORIAN

An easy death! Evidently, Professor Bernhardt, we have different interpretations of that. After what the nurse has told me, it would seem your patient needs absolution more than certain others might need it.

BERNHARDI

But, I must repeat, Your Reverence, the girl doesn't know that there is no hope for her. She is cheerful, happy and—without remorse. Your presence would indicate to her—

RECTOR (interrupting)

I feel that I cannot leave this room, save with a heavy sense of blame, unless I give this dying girl the consolations of our holy faith.

BERNHARDI

From any such blame, Your Reverence, God and every earthly judge will absolve you. But I, as physician in this case, cannot allow you to approach the girl's bedside.

RECTOR

But I was summoned—

BERNHARDI

Not by me. And I can only repeat again that—on the ground of a physician who must guard his patient's welfare until the last breath—I must refuse you entrance to this girl's room!

And the following equally rough translation from the close of the manuscript will afford an idea of the blind alley into which the playwright has led his discussion.

BERNHARDI

My dear Counselor, you forget, like everyone else, that I hadn't the vaguest notion of starting a controversy. I simply did what I thought was the right thing in a very special case.

COUNSELOR

But that was just the trouble! If one always did the right thing or, especially, if one always started to do the right thing early mornings and kept on consistently doing the right thing through the day, by the time night came round it would be a sure bet that he'd find himself in jail.

BERNHARDI

And shall I tell you something, my friend? If you had been in my place, you'd have done exactly as I did.

COUNSELOR

Possibly. And then—you'll pardon me, Professor—and then I would have been just as big a fool as you were.

CURTAIN.

Like "General John Regan," this play happily is also without the so-called arbitrary "love interest," there being but one woman in the cast of characters (a nurse), and she appearing only for an unimportant minute or two in the first act. Like "Regan," too, its manner is perfectly natural, there being no undue straining for extravagant situations and ringing curtain lines. The fault of the exhibit, however, lies in its ceaseless and not particularly sharp-toothed mastication of a polemical bone from which most of the meat is removed after the first two of the five grand chews. Were it not for the circumstance that I distrust superlatives as I distrust Greek barbers, all women over twelve years of age and my own judgment of the poetry of John Masefield, I should say that the acting of the Kleines Theater company, taken as a unified product, is the very best example of the practice that has thus far in life come to my notice. Beside the performance of Heinrich Schroth in the role of Bernhardt, even such an excellent instance of acting as that afforded by Norman McKinnel in "Rutherford and Son" suffers a dimming; while, so far as the ensemble work is concerned, polished with an almost uncanny cunning to a degree that seems nearly perfect by the directing hand of Herr Victor Barnowsky, our American

theater's closest match would be a league removed. As a sample of one item in Victor's staging of the play, let me bring our native producers' attention to the circumstance that where two or more couples happen to occupy the stage in the same scene, and where the manuscript calls for speech on the part of only one of these couples at a time, Victor, instead of causing the other couple, or couples, to while away the time in the usual preposterous "dumb show" until the couple at the other side of the stage gets through, has the usually unoccupied groups talk at the same time and in an equally loud voice. The result is lifelike and convincing; and the audience, as some might infer, loses not a single important line of the dialogue.

* * *

A dramatic critic knows women. Not merely "knows women," mind you, but *knows women*—just like that. If you don't believe it ask one. Or read one. A dramatic critic knows exactly what women will do and exactly how they will act on each and every occasion. He proves he knows it by writing it in his paper. And woe be to the young playwright who doesn't know women as he, the critic, knows them, and who causes them to act differently than the critic knows absolutely they would act. For example, an experienced dramatic critic knows full well that every woman who has had a past will some day, just as sure as you are born, fall in love with a good man and regret that past. For example, the shrewd critic knows full well that every woman who has a wayward married sister will go to the rascal's apartments and make it appear to sister's husband that it was she and not little Sis who figured in the liaison. He has come lately to know, too, for an absolute certainty, that woman is the pursuer of the male and not *vice versa*; and he knows, just as sure as the Creator made little apples, that every woman who is embraced with undue fire by a man will struggle violently to free herself and, this accomplished, will shrink from the brute, bury her ashamed and tear-bespattered face in her arm and

exclaim: "I realize *now* what you meant! Thank God, I realized it before it was *too late*! I hate you! I hate you!! I hate you!!!" In a word, to borrow from the unchaste vernacular, the critic is one wise little guy.

This comprehensive and authentic knowledge of women that comes to a dramatic critic through protracted experience with women (in plays) is and has been responsible for many curious things. For one, much of the reputation for "knowing women" that was enjoyed by the late Clyde Fitch. The dramatic critics told the country that Fitch "certainly knew women," and Fitch got his reputation. Although I have not the faintest desire in the world to detract from this Fitch reputation for knowing women, it yet seems to me that, to some extent, it was not a case of Fitch "knowing women" as much as it was a case of the German playwrights, of whose writings Fitch was an assiduous reader, "knowing women." In another phrasing, Fitch's more accurate dissections of the genus frau were, to a degree, the dissections that had previously been negotiated by Germans. An excursion into the popular German plays of the period of the Fitch activity in America will bring my little point home to you.

But my main point is this: That poor Fitch got his reputation for "knowing women" from the dramatic critics, not from the most incisive and expert work he disclosed in that frou-frou direction—whether original with him or not—but from the petty chicaneries which (wise soul that he was) he knew he would have to make use of to convince a critical confraternity already steeped beyond redemption in the artificial scents of stock theatrical feminine psychology. And thus it came about, as it always does seem to come about in American cases like this, that the simple, commonplace and perfectly obvious spectacle of a girl in a kimono doing up her hair with a bunch of hairpins stuck between her lips instead of in her hand was the thing that brought the critical hosannas about Fitch's head and caused to be overlooked his deeper and more

significant female analyses—whether original with him or not, I again repeat, being an inconsequent factor in the argument.

I have mentioned German playwrights and their views of the laissez-faire sex. I wonder if I exaggerate when I write that, of the Teutons in the comedy sphere of the German theater in the last two decades, none seems to have shown a more searching eye to the whims and foibles, the mind and the never-mind of woman than Herr Lothar Schmidt, whose latest and weakest piece, "THE BOOK OF A WOMAN," is witnessable at the Theater in the Königgrätzer Strasse, Berlin. Taking the antique theme of Wife, Other Woman's Husband, Wife's Husband and Other Woman, Schmidt has succeeded again in indicating that he is a super-Fitch so far as the ladies go. As a sample of his touch, one need only refer to the scene at the close of the second act of this piece between the errant husband and his mother-in-law. The wrathful wife has departed in thundering tears, and has handed over her deceitful spouse into the clutches of her mother. The latter and the dejected man sit across the table for a moment looking at each other. The silence is full of feeling. Then—mother-in-law reaches across the table, touches the husband on the hand and, with an old woman's kindly and understanding shake of the head, says: "My boy, why is it that you *always* manage to get found out?" The play, save for the exposition of the humors of the chickens and hens of the human barnyard, is a trivial affair and infinitely inferior to Schmidt's other comedy writings. Like most German done plays, it is very well acted and politely staged.

At the Rose Theater, "KRONE UND FESSEL," (Crown and Fetters), a four-act military paprika by Walter Howard, of the species promiscuous in the Third Avenues of Europe. At the Schiller Theater in the Wallnertheaterstrasse, Adolph L'Arronge's *volksstück* "HASEMANN'S TÖCHTER" (Hasemann's Daughters), in which a father, who has left the upbringing and lives of his daughters wholly in their mother's hands, steps in

and averts disaster before it is what in Anglo-Saxon drama is known as "too late." At the Luisen Theater, "DIE DREI SCHWESTERN RANDOLPH" (The Three Sisters Randolph), by Ernst Ritterfeld, from the novel of Hedwig Courths-Mahler—a panorama of the woes and woos of three young damsels whose papa has been forced to decamp abruptly because of gambling debts, leaving them alone in the cold, cruel world. And at the Deutsches Theater, Tolstoi's jolly little thing, "DER LEBENDE LEICHNAM" (The Living Corpse).

On to Vienna, where the worthiest of the plays that greet me is "DAS PRINZIP," by Hermann Bahr, visible in the Carltheater. Although the play as it presents itself to us conveys the impression of having been written in considerable haste—one has a feeling of happy point after happy point overlooked by the author—the work is still sufficiently witty and animating to take deserved rank. Its central figure is one Frederick Esch, an optimist *de luxe*, a humanitarian calibre .44, a devout believer in mankind, a stout apostle of the theory that the good in people far outweighs the bad. Esch, trusting and at peace with all the cosmos, dreams along his days and permits his children, a son and a daughter, to go their own ways undisturbed. When his wife speaks to him about the latter, Esch merely smiles and says: "No worry, my dear; they'll get along and behave perfectly well if we trust them. That's human nature." And his wife shakes her head a bit in a hope shadowed by maybe—and the world goes on. Only Esch's friend, the sour old Kreger, a pessimist of long cut, a piece of crystallized uric acid, an incarnation of the spirit of the rhubarb plant, clashes with the sunshiny Esch openly and violently. Whatever Esch believes, Kreger doesn't believe. "Human nature?" says Kreger. "No good! Never was—never will be. Your theories—rot! You'll see for yourself one of these fine days!"

Then news comes to Esch that his son has for some time been entangled with a servant in the household of the Gräfin—a cook—and that he is about to marry

her. Kreger says nothing. He merely grins. But Esch sticks to his theories and refuses to lose faith. Everything will come out for the best, he repeats. And he goes to see the cook, finds her to be a perfectly respectable and housewifely sort, and tells both her and his son that he will be pleased to have her as a daughter-in-law. No sooner is this settled than Esch learns that his young daughter has made off on a morganatic holiday with a gardener in whom Esch has always placed the deepest faith. And the good Kreger again says nothing, but continues to grin. Esch returns the grin with: "I still decline to worry or to retract. I know my daughter and I trust her, and I know Peter, the gardener, and I trust him; and I am sure he will treat her well and that in the end all will come out right. That's the way of human nature, if you leave it to itself." And presently Peter and Esch's daughter return and prove Esch's theory to have been sound; and Esch's son and his kitchen inamorata decide it would be equally uncomfortable for each of them to endeavor to amalgamate their different stations in life; and the optimist and humanitarian, turning to Kreger with the same old faithful and trusting smile, says (if I may make bold to do Bahr into English for you):

ESCH

And now, dear Kreger, tell me what you think would have happened if, instead of maintaining this iron-ribbed trust in my children and human nature in general, I had sought to doubt, to punish, to revile, to curse?

KREGER

Well, well—possibly, possibly! Of course, if things were intended to come out this way—

ESCH

*** But things came out otherwise than I intended, than I thought they would; yet they came out pretty well, didn't they, dear Kreger?

KREGER (with a rebellious frown)

Um, yes—this once—accidentally.

ESCH (laughing)

But we must leave something to accident in all human affairs. Trust people to themselves, but don't be amazed or hurt if it so happens that their ways—and not your own—prevail. *** And perhaps some day when a more liberal and happier people than we, say in twenty thousand years—

GERTRUDE (*his wife, interrupting*)
In two thousand surely, Frederick.

KREGER (*grumpily, to GERTRUDE*)
Oh, let him rave!

ESCH
Did I say only two thousand? Well, perhaps one oughtn't be too impatient, too hasty. (*Introspectively, in a far-off tone*) But—

KREGER (*in a whisper, to his wife*)
By George, he is about to think up a new theory!

ESCH (*continuing*)
But, if the right sort of people are ever born, in twenty thousand or two thousand or two hundred years, then—

CURTAIN.

I fear, in glancing back over this immethodical road map of the theme of the piece, I have failed to impart a proper sense of the very nice discretion with which Bahr has treated his materials. As I read over what I have here above set down on the printed page, I receive the impression of a play all honey and poppy seed, sweet, syrupy, pandering to the sentimental imbecilities and violet water logic of the International Order of Fraternal Dummkopfs. And "DAS PRINZIP" is no such play. All in all, while assuredly not another "Concert"; while, forsooth, maybe not even of the intrinsic cleverness of "The Yellow Nightingale," still a piece of stage labor worth while.

Next in current importance here comes the talented German, Paul Apel, with his highly imaginative dream play, "HANS SONNENSTÖSSER'S HÖLLENFAHRT" (Trip to Hell), with its startling likeness in several salient directions to "The Poor Little Rich Girl." A carefully and intelligently conceived manuscript, detailing in consistently amusing manner the nightmare adventures of Hans with the family of his wealthy fiancée.

* * *

Arrived in Paris, the name of Jacques Richepin, son of M. Jean, on the playbill of the spectacular comedy "LE MINARET," draws us into the Théâtre de la Renaissance (in the out-o'-the-way little restaurant adjacent to which I recommend to your Lucullan taste a

dexterous *hors d'œuvre* bred by pouring liquid Camembert upon toasted caviar).

Jacques's latest dish is a sort of "Sumurun" set to words, a revel of genteel lech and tropic sighings, another "*amour virumque cano*." Colloquially, a sort of "Everybody's Doing It" played on kettledrums and cymbals, with an obligato by the incense. You know: Myriem, Maimouna, Zouz-Zuvabé, Shamsennahar, Saadette, Riha, Zahra, Nagma, Amina, Sabiha, Mes-saouda, Fahima, Yamlika and all the other gauzy packages minxing around in the divanized harem chamber with the bold and handsome intruders Nouredine and Mustapha while the usually wary Grand Eunuque is occupied yon. Gay stuff for the *matinée* classes and the visiting devils from Grand Rapids and Elmira. There and here, M. Jacques has shown an inventive flash and a fleeting ray of fresh humor; but on the whole his effort is heavy and uninspired. The "*musique de scène*," by Tiarko Richepin, is amateurish and flat. According to the program notice, Tiarko's music is "*très importante*." Good for Tiarko!

At the Comédie Française, "VOULOIR" (Will Power), by Gustave Guiches. A wild compound of neurasthenia and passion, flavored with much unintentional humor. In other words, a conventional French popular problem play. At the Odéon, "RÉUSSIR" (To Succeed), by Paul Zahori. See above, add a dash of politics and multiply by two. At the Châtelet, the "MARIE-MAGDELEINE" of Maeterlinck, already sufficiently intelligible to Americans despite certain Olga Nethersolecisms. At the Palais Royal, "LA PRÉSIDENTE," by Hennequin and Veber, also observable in the Residenz-Theater, Berlin, under the title of "Die Frau Präsidentin." Mlle. Gobette, a loose but tidy little package, is smuggled by some scallwags into the bedroom of *le président Tricoïnte* during the absence of the latter's wife. Tricoïnte is horrified and shocked and doesn't know what to do. (Oh, yes, anything is allowable in farce!) Before he can make up his mind, in comes the Minister of Justice!

(To be continued in our next.)

GETTING RID OF THE ACTOR

By H. L. Mencken

WHY waste a whole evening, once or twice a week, in a stuffy and over-red theater, breathing zymotic air, sniffing discordant perfumery, looking at idiotic scenery, listening to the bleeding English of ignorant and preposterous actors? Have you ever, in all your life, seen five leading men who actually looked like civilized gentlemen, or even like the authentic valets, head clerks or unburied corpses of civilized gentlemen? Have you ever sat through a whole performance without wishing it were possible to take at least *one* of the actors out into the alley, there to do execution of the *lex non scripta* upon him? *Eheu*, Postume, what all of us have suffered at the hands of such strutting mummery and mountebanks! How we have writhed and squirmed beneath their astounding outrages upon the vulgate! How we have leaped and squealed under their broad "a's," their fearful renderings of proper names, their obscene attempts at boarding school French! How our paws have itched to grab them by the collars of their advanced coats, and to strangle them with their futurist shirts, and to anatomize them with the razor edges of their superbly ironed pantaloons! . . . What is worse than an actor? Two actors? Three actors? A whole stage full of actors! An endless succession of actors! . . .

There are, of course, such things as good actors. Let us be just and admit it. I have seen and known a few myself, and have heard of a few more. There are half a dozen in England and as many in France. In Germany, I dare say, the police have the names of twenty. (One memorable night, in that strange land, I

saw two on the stage at once!) But is the good actor, either at home or abroad, the normal actor, the average actor? Of course he is not. He is the rare actor, the miraculous actor, almost the fabulous actor. Examine a hundred bartenders and you will find that fully sixty of them actually know how to tend bar: they can mix a cocktail that, whatever its faults, is at least fit to drink, and they have the craft needed to draw a seidel of Pilsener and to beat the cash register. But in the allied art of acting there is no such general dispersion of talent. A handful of outstanding super-actors have it all. The rest of them not only don't know how to act, but they don't know that they don't know.

Argue with them for years, and you will never convince them that the mushy jargon they speak is not English. Chain them to mirrors until they die, dry up and blow away, and they will never notice that the clothes they wear are not worn by cultured white men, and that the way they walk, gesticulate, make love, blow their noses, commit murders, crawl, lope, die, eat, trot, pace, jump out of a window, climb up a rain-spout, sing, sneeze, roar, whoop, swear, pray, sit down and get up is not the way affected by the free citizens of any Christian commonwealth. No; the average actor never notices these things. He never notices anything—saving only the doings of other actors. These rivals, whom he despises (and usually with reason), he devotes himself to imitating. The result is the so-called art of acting—an art as thoroughly dehumanized as that of cutting tombstones.

But how to escape these assassins of

English, these libelers of dramatists, these pestiferous gnats and gadflies of our hours of ease? The thing is as simple as marrying a widow! Don't *see* plays; *read* them. Don't go to a theater for your dramatic entertainment, but to a bookstore. Don't pay two dollars for a seat between two fat women; seventy-five cents will buy you the play, and you may read it in comfort and at your leisure, spread out in your own quiet library, miles away from plush and perfumery, a jug and a siphon at your side, your nose untortured, your mind untroubled, your soul ripe for adventures among masterpieces.

Time was when it was difficult. Time was when it was almost impossible. But no more. The Ibsen plays led the way and the Shaw plays followed after. Today a new play is published almost as soon as it is performed—and sometimes even before. And if, now and then, it is not published—if a dramatist or a manager, growing wise, fears to let your eyes compete with his actors—then don't let it worry you. You will not be missing much. All of the good plays, with very few exceptions, are being printed today. Most of the bad ones—the cheap and tawdry melodramas, the machine-made sentimental comedies, the “strong” variations upon borrowed themes, the tedious adaptations of French and German farces, the “Aztec Romances” and “Master Minds,” the exquisite confections of David Belasco and Charles Klein—are *not* being printed.

You can now get, in any bookstore, all of the dramas of Henrik Ibsen, John Millington Synge, John Galsworthy, Lady Augusta Gregory, William Butler Yeats, Granville Barker, Leo Tolstoi, Maxim Gorki, Alfred Sutro, St. John Hankin, Stephen Phillips, Percy Mackaye, Maurice Maeterlinck, Oscar Wilde, Israel Zangwill and Henry Arthur Jones, and all save one or two of George Bernard Shaw, Arthur Wing Pinero and Arnold Bennett. A complete edition of Gerhart Hauptmann, admirably translated, has now reached its second volume and seventh play, and several other Hauptmann plays are to be had separately. Of the dramas of August Strind-

berg, at least fifteen have been translated—twice as many as have ever been acted in English—and two or three further volumes are announced. The principal plays of Eugène Brieux have been in English for two years or more, and his complete canon is soon to follow. So with the plays of Hermann Sudermann: I read his “Heimat” (Magda) in the vulgate so long ago as the year 1900. So with Frank Wedekind. So with Arthur Schnitzler. So with Björnsterne Björnson. So with José Echegaray. So, to finish the foreigners, with Anton Tchekoff, Leonid Andreiff, Paul Hervieu, Edmond Rostand and Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

All the best plays of the late Clyde Fitch, including “The Climbers,” “The Truth” and “Nathan Hale,” are now to be had in pretty little cloth-bound books at seventy-five cents apiece. For the same price you can get most of the pieces presented by the New Irish Theater Company, and such excellent things as Stanley Houghton's “Hindle Wakes,” and Melchior Lengyel's “Typhoon,” and Jerome K. Jerome's “The Passing of the Third Floor Back,” and Franz Adam Beyerlein's “Lights Out” (Taps), and Nikolai V. Gogol's “The Inspector-General,” and Herman Heijermans's “The Ghetto,” and Laurence Housman's “Pains and Penalties,” and the amusing light comedies of Hubert Henry Davies, W. Somerset Maugham and R. C. Carton. For a dollar or \$1.25 you can get Edward Sheldon's “The Nigger,” Paul Heyse's “Mary of Magdala,” John Masefield's “The Tragedy of Nan,” Charles Frederic Nirdlinger's version of José Echegaray's “El Gran Galeoto” (The World and His Wife), Edward Knoblauch's “Kismet,” Rudolph Besier's “Don” and “Lady Patricia,” Arthur Schnitzler's “Anatol,” William Vaughn Moody's “The Great Divide,” Githa Sowerby's “Rutherford and Son,” and Josephine Preston Peabody's “The Piper.” And if your taste is for more elemental things, there are “Arizona” and “Alabama,” the best plays of Augustus Thomas, not to mention “As a Man Thinks,” his worst; and Anthony Hope Hawkins's “The Ad-

ventures of Lady Ursula," and Richard Harding Davis's "The Dictator," and B. McDonald Hastings's "The New Sin," and Charles Rann Kennedy's "The Servant in the House," and Louis N. Parker's "Disraeli," and most of the pieces of Haddon Chambers, Sydney Grundy and Madeline Lucette Ryley. In England, as on the Continent, practically all of the living dramatists now print their plays. So far as I know, indeed, there is but one of distinction who refuses to do so, and that one is Sir James M. Barrie.

Glance through the current publishers' announcements and you will find ten plays for every one printed five years ago, or even two years ago. The Duffields labor with an ambitious series called "Plays of Today and Tomorrow"; the Scribners, having given us Ibsen in three different editions, now devote themselves to Strindberg, Tchekoff and Björnson; the Boston firm of Luce & Company publishes Synge, Lady Gregory and the rest of the Neo-Celts, beside Strindberg, Sudermann and a number of Englishmen; the Macmillans give us the new things of Phillips, Jones, Zangwill and Sheldon; Mr. Huebsch tackles Hauptmann in five volumes of more than six hundred pages each; and Mr. Kennerley, having tried his hand with Schnitzler, Hankin, Barker and Masefield, proceeds bravely to Becque, Lange, Wied, Giacosa and Bergstrom, and announces that he is going to print the unacted dramas of a number of outreaching Americans. And on my desk at the moment, despite the fact that the late summer is a poor, poor time for publishing anything, I find no less than a dozen volumes of plays, including Mrs. Katrina Trask's "IN THE VANGUARD" (Macmillan), Harry Kemp's "JUDAS" (Kennerley), George Moore's "ESTHER WATERS" (Luce), the second volume of the Luce Strindberg, the same volume of the Huebsch Hauptmann, Elizabeth Baker's "CHAINS" (Luce), Stanley Houghton's "HINDLE WAKES" (Luce), and several contributions from Irishmen who follow Synge and Lady Gregory.

The best of all these current plays, I think, are "CHAINS," "HINDLE WAKES"

and the "MARY BROOME" of Allan Monkhouse (Luce). The first named, when it was presented in London two years ago, made a small sensation, and no doubt it would have succeeded in this country, too, had not Charles Frohman, that incomparable patron of dramatic art, hired a Broadway dramatizer to denaturize it and write a happy ending for it. In the original there is no happy ending. It is plain tragedy—the sodden, greasy tragedy of everyday. Charlie Wilson, an underpaid London clerk, revolts against the narrowness and emptiness of his life. He is tired of sitting at a desk all day and of looking at his wife across a table all evening. Fired by the example of a boyhood friend, he resolves to break the chains, go out to Australia, and there seek a man's work and a man's opportunities. Easier planned, alas, than done! His wife and his wife's relatives are solidly against it. They accuse him of wanting to desert his responsibilities; they denounce him as if he were some fugitive from justice. But Charlie clings to his plan; if they will not let him go with their blessing, he will sneak away and prove them wrong. Then destiny plays him her inevitable joke. His wife has a weapon left—the news, to wit, that she is to become a mother. Poor Charlie surrenders. A map of Queensland is on the wall. Resignedly he pulls it down and tears it into bits.

An excellent play for reading, well constructed and well written. Of almost equal merit is "HINDLE WAKES," whatever its misadventures in the theater. Here the story is a cynical *reductio ad absurdum* of the ancient fable of the seduced virgin. Fanny Hawthorn is the girl, and the young man who "plays her false" (with her full knowledge and enthusiastic consent) is Alan Jeffcote, son of her father's employer. Old Jeffcote, getting news of the adventure, resolves to enact the magnificent role of the Spartan father. That is to say, he sends for Fanny and orders his son to marry her. But Fanny is a modern! The tears of the Magdalen are not for her. She refuses flatly to marry the reluctant Alan, or even to

discuss the matter. He was good enough for a light-hearted week end, but the thought of being tied to him for life appals her. Thus the ancient Jeffcote is flabbergasted and another familiar moral tale is stood on its head. Much the same story is told in "MARY BROOME," and with equal skill. Both plays, indeed, belong assertively to the new drama of ideas. You may object to them in certain details, but you cannot escape rejoicing over their clear and straightforward thinking, their freedom from conventional rumble-bumble, their obvious honesty of purpose.

Mrs. Trask's "IN THE VANGUARD" has been getting an enormous amount of notice in the newspapers, like her "King Alfred's Jewel" before it, but I am unable to discern any merit in it, either as a play or as an argument. It is, in fact, a very commonplace and platitudinous tract against war, and all of the characters are stuffed with mush. Specifically, it tells us how one Philip, a young lawyer, is urged to go to war by his sweetheart, Elsa, and how he is converted to the Lake Mohonk doctrine by a wounded enemy, and how he thereupon refuses a commission and leaves the camp, and how Elsa, seeing a great light, loves him for his desertion as she once loved him for his daring, and how the public odium visited upon him is made up for by the rich Mr. Greart, who gives him a permanent and lucrative job and so enables him to marry. From end to end of this highly artificial piece the dialogue is stilted and the action is laborious. The arguments it presents are old and full of moth holes, and the way in which they are presented does not give them any air of newness. In brief, a clumsy and stupid composition.

Equally dull, I regret to report, are "JUDAS," by Harry Kemp (*Kennerley*), "THE ICE LENS," by George Frederick Gundelfinger (*Shakespeare Press*), "JACOB LEISLER," by W. O. Bates (*Kennerley*), and "THE AMERICANS," by Edwin Davies Schoonmaker (*Kennerley*). The first is an attempt to explain Judas's betrayal of Christ; the second is a tin pot melodrama in a college setting; the

third is a historical tragedy of seventeenth century New York, and the fourth—but the fourth I have been unable to read at all, and so I can't tell you what it is. The chief trouble with each of these plays is that the author has little skill at writing natural dialogue. Such a lack, it must be plain, is bound to be fatal to a stage play, even to a stage play planned for reading. The long and bombastic speeches of Mr. Gundelfinger's heroes and villains amuse the reader at first, but pretty soon they begin to bore him; and the vapid, sing-song blank verse of Mr. Schoonmaker is worse still. Of the four, Mr. Kemp comes nearest to genuine dramatic writing. For contrast, compare the lively and picturesque dialogue in "THE DRONE," by Rutherford Mayne, and "PATRIOTS," by Lennox Robinson (*Luce*), two brisk little Irish pieces. All the followers of Synge have caught something of his craft in this department. Their characters do not speechify; they talk. And it is this very fact which makes them real, and gives to the whole of the Neo-Celtic drama an ingratiating plausibility and intimacy. The slightest of Lady Gregory's one-acters, for example, is full of a genuine humanness. It may be as short as the Dogberry scene in "Much Ado About Nothing," but like the Dogberry scene it leaves a vivid memory behind it. One almost *smells* her clodhoppers.

The Rev. Dr. Price Collier's book on "GERMANY AND THE GERMANS" (*Scribner*), so eagerly awaited by readers of his "England and the English," is a decidedly less vivid and interesting volume than that great success of four years ago. For one thing, it is too large, too puffy and too loose-limbed; and for another thing, the author's attitude toward the German people, as opposed to their rulers, is too often that of half-amused contempt: an attitude offering hopeless difficulties to the man who seeks to explain one race of men to another. The first-named defect is constantly visible. Some of the chapters in the book are of intolerable length and swing around the whole circle of German habits, ideals, traditions and aspirations. The same

facts are presented over and over again, in slightly varied forms; a strange effect of tediousness, so memorably absent from "England and the English," creeps into more than one of the six hundred or so pages. In brief, the book is a very poor successor to its forerunner, both as entertainment and as a record of fact. One somehow expected from Mr. Collier a striking and satisfying piece of writing. As it is, one finds a volume that is distinctly inferior, in more than one important respect, to Miss I. A. R. Wylie's "The Germans" and to Ray Stannard Baker's "Seen in Germany." I have found clearer thinking and better reading, indeed, in a bookstall pamphlet, "Our German Cousins," issued two or three years ago by the London *Daily Mail*.

Mr. Collier's fundamental error, I believe, lies in his assumption that all the progress of modern Germany, or at any rate nine-tenths of it, has come from above—that the German people have been hauled up to civilized grace by their hereditary lords and masters. On the surface this seems to be true enough: the outstanding figure of Bismarck shows how much they owe to intelligent, far-seeing, and, what is more important still, domineering and ruthless leadership. But it is not to be forgotten that this leading would have been impossible without willing and enthusiastic following, nor is it to be forgotten that a manifest selective quality has always marked that following. That is to say, the Germans have made their leaders as much as their leaders have made the Germans, and even so dominating a personality as Bismarck had to take his tune from the people behind him. He was successful so long as he gave strict heed to public opinion; he came to swift grief on the two great occasions when he sought to hammer it into unwelcome patterns. So with his successor, the present Emperor. The Germans follow Wilhelm willingly for the sole and sufficient reason that they agree with him. He has been able to build up a huge army and a powerful navy because nine Germans out of ten have supported him. Whenever he has outraged national

opinion—as in the case, for example, of his London *Daily Telegraph* indiscretion—he has seen his "divine right" go glimmering overnight, and has had to submit himself to his lieges as docilely as any constitutional ruler in Christendom.

The Germans suffer a bureaucracy because they believe in a bureaucracy: more than any other people on earth they have respect for the trained man, the professor, the expert. Our American doctrine that the consensus of opinion among ordinary men is worth more than the individual opinion of the extraordinary man is one that they reject as absurd and indefensible. They would regard it as imbecile to allow a lay board of health to determine highly technical questions of quarantine and public hygiene, and by the same token they regard it as imbecile to allow amateurs to determine other professional problems. The mayor of a German city is not an ignorant and grasping politician—he is a man trained to a definite and difficult profession, and practising it with professional self-respect. His aim is not to please ward heelers, but to give efficient service. And it is the peculiarity of the Germans that they understand and value such service. They are willing to submit to an expert, even at some personal inconvenience, because they believe that an expert, all things considered, is likely to know more about his business than the man in the street. This is not lack of spirit—it is merely sound sense. And the cause underlying all the progress of modern Germany—progress even more healthy and notable than our own—is just that talent for discipline, that genius for social organization, that intelligent division of labor.

Naturally enough, the puerilities of party politics do not interest the German. He does not waste his time intriguing that this or that herder of voters shall be rewarded with this or that place at the trough. Such a system seems to him to be wholly childish and evil, for all its alleged benefits as a "training" in government. The time that Americans waste in jockeying one numskull out of office and another into

it he devotes to more civilized and profitable enterprises. Nor does he give ear to quacks with sure cures for all the sorrows of the world. Such a mountebank as the Hon. William Jennings Bryan, with his astounding repertoire of bogus remedies, would be almost unimaginable in Germany. Even the wildest anarchists and Socialists there are more moderate and intelligent men. As for our vice crusaders and prohibitionists, our Parkhursts and Comstocks, the Germans would not even do them the honor of laughing at them. The German newspapers devote no space to the gyrations of such perunists; the German people are not interested in their bellowing; the German government does not grant them any share in the making of laws. . . .

But enough of this tedescan rhapsody! A lot of books remain. For example, three describing human existence in godless, outlandish places: the Canal Zone, Matteawan, Broadway. At once the liveliest and the most instructive of them is "ZONE POLICEMAN 88," by Harry A. Franck (*Century Co.*), a truly delightful chronicle of observation and adventure at Panama. This Mr. Franck attracted attention three or four years ago with an unconventional book of travel called "A Vagabond Journey Around the World," and a bit later he published a volume describing a jaunt through Spain on shank's mare. He arrived at Colon in his customary condition of fiscal decrepitude and enlisted as a high private in the Zone constabulary. But first he was farmed out for a month to the Census Bureau—and in these two offices, naturally enough, he had a prime opportunity of seeing all that was worth seeing on the Isthmus. His book is not at all like the other current canal books. There is not a table of statistics in it from end to end; it deals entirely with people—the brisk young Americans who are bossing the great job, the chromatic roughnecks who are digging the actual dirt, and the lazy Panamans who are watching it fly. And they are all presented with sympathy and good humor, even the human trombones whose snores make the nights

hideous in bachelor quarters, and the stupid officials who try to make twenty nationalities understand English by bawling it *fortissimo*. Dr. E. H. Williams's "THE WALLED CITY" (*Funk-Wagnalls*) is written with much less skill than Mr. Franck's book, but its pictures of life in an asylum for the criminal insane are full of curious details, and must needs be interesting to those of us who expect to end our days there. Julian Street's "WELCOME TO OUR CITY" (*Lane*) is a somewhat labored guidebook to that portion of New York in which headwaiters rank above archbishops, and the Sunday school superintendents of Allentown and Zanesville take their annual flings. Alas, for the chroniclers of such imitation Gomorrah: fashions in deviltry change even faster than fashions in piety! Mr. Street confesses, indeed, in his preface, that a good part of his story was out of date before he could have it set up in type.

Of the novels that have reached me since our last meeting, the most interesting, and by long odds, is "THE INSIDE OF THE CUP," by Winston Churchill (*Macmillan*). I say interesting, and yet two-thirds of its 513 pages of fine print are given over to theological disputations, and in one place there is a report of a sermon running to 4,783 words. Well, why not? Is theology, in itself, an uninteresting subject? Not at all. Some of the most engrossing books ever written in the world are full of it. For example, the Gospel According to St. Luke. For example, Nietzsche's "Der Antichrist." For example, Mark Twain's "What is Man?" St. Augustine's Confessions, Haeckel's "The Riddle of the Universe" and Huxley's Essays. How, indeed, could a thing be dull that has sent hundreds of thousands of first-rate men—the very flower of the race—to the gallows and the stake, and made and broken dynasties, and inspired the greatest of human hopes and enterprises, and embroiled whole continents in war? No, theology is not a soporific. The reason it so often seems so is that its public exposition has chiefly fallen, in these later, degenerate days, into the

hands of a sect of intellectual effeminate, who begin by mistaking it for a sub-department of etiquette, and then proceed to anoint it with butter, rose water and talcum powder. Whenever a first-rate intellect tackles it, as in the case of Huxley, or in that of Nietzsche, or in that of Leo XIII, it at once takes on all the vigorous fascination it had in Luther's day, and if men, grown soft, are no longer willing to die for it, they are at least willing to dispute over it, and to get into rages about it, and to damn their opponents to hell with the utmost ferocity and enjoyment.

I am not going to flatter Mr. Churchill by comparing him to Huxley and Leo, but all the same his book shows that he has given sober and diligent consideration to the principal problems of latter day Christian theology, and that he has come to conclusions which, whatever their defects, are still intelligible and workable. The central figure of his chronicle is the Rev. John Hodder, a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church. John goes from a sleepy New England village to a large and rich parish in a Middle Western city, presumably St. Louis, and immediately all of the said problems descend upon him and begin to beset him sorely. The leading folks of that parish are very opulent and enormously orthodox. They have no doubt whatever that a benign, well-bred and sagacious God rules the universe, and that he has the highest regard (not to say actual veneration) for them. Hasn't he proved it by giving them money, ease and power? And by making them his agents in the distribution of alms and good advice to the lowly? Their jealousy for the authority and reputation of that God amounts to a sort of class feeling. They look upon it as a gross indecency to question the least of His mandates, or any of the glosses and variations of His ordained agents and interpreters. It is the proper and dignified thing, in their view, to believe that Jonah was swallowed by a whale, and so they believe it with great unctio.

John, at the start, is disposed to acquiesce in this affecting fidelity to the

faith. He, too, is orthodox. But in a short while a number of messengers from the devil begin to shake up his pious cocksureness, and all of those messengers, naturally enough, are women. One is a fair parishioner who balks at supernaturalism—and supports her balking with disconcerting logic. Another is the daughter of the leading pillar of the church—a contumacious young woman who regards her papa as a whited sepulchre and is not bashful about saying so. The third and last is a woman of the streets, one of the beneficiaries of the parish uplift. From this woman the astounded John learns how hollow and idiotic that uplift really is—how small its harvest, how cheap its methods, how pharisaical its tone. And the three streams of doubt, flowing together, presently make a roaring torrent, and the Rev. John finds his faith slipping away. He no longer believes in revelation. He no longer believes in the uplift. He no longer believes in his flock. All that is left of his old orthodoxy is a firm belief in the Beatitudes—the one element of Christianity that his parishioners choose to overlook.

What to do? Compromise, temporize, make the best of it—as thousands of earnest clergymen do every year? Or go into the pulpit and tell the truth as he sees it? John chooses the latter course. He denounces his principal vestrymen as Pharisees and hypocrites. He takes them publicly to task for their commercial and political swinishness. He points out definite offenses against the laws of common decency and fair play, mentioning names and dates. He exposes the vacuity and insincerity of the Christian charity which takes rent from dive keepers and then builds hospitals for their victims. He goes through that congregation of frauds and mountebanks, that typical camorra of rogues and uplifters, with a rhetorical sandbag—and presently he is before the bishop to answer charges of heresy and slander. But the bishop, who has seen the light too, is with him. He keeps his church, even if he loses his congregation. Out go the money changers and publicans, and in come the ragtag and bobtail.

The gentlemanly idol of the departed flock is overturned. In its place John tries to set up a living God—a God who judges human beings by their striving and good intent, and not at all by their bank accounts and millinery. And the daughter of the whitened sepulchre joins him as his wife and prime minister.

A long and deadly serious story, but one marked by so much thoughtfulness and sincerity that every reader whose taste is above puerile intrigue and sentimentality must find much of interest in it. Its fundamental defect, of course, is that it does not show us how John makes out. He has an expensive church on his hands, with a whole archipelago of parish houses, soup kitchens and moral stockades attached to it, and though the exiled Pharisees have not succeeded in deposing him from the ministry, they have at least succeeded in cutting off his revenues. How will he win his way in the heartbreaking future? Perhaps Mr. Churchill will tell us in a second volume; as it is, he leaves all save the first and second acts of his drama unplayed. A number of lesser defects are also visible in the story. For one thing, the ready approval of the bishop is difficult to imagine. Bishops are not in the habit of offending laymen as rich as those of John's flock, even for the glory of God. Again, the love affair of the bold domineer is a shade too fortunate, a shade too well made, as the French would say. But even admitting all these blotches on the canvas, it is a dignified work that Mr. Churchill has given us. In the midst of a vast emission of piffle, he is one novelist who takes his business seriously and gives to it the reflection and painstaking that it deserves.

The other novels are of vastly smaller bulk and beam. Arnold Bennett's "THE OLD ADAM" (*Doran*) is a sort of second boiling of "Denry the Audacious," and reveals the light humor and pervading improbability of that already-forgotten work. It shows us how Edward Henry Machin, now an alderman and with \$30,000 a year, is lured from the Five Towns to London by the glamour of the footlights, and how he there invests a

small fortune in a fantastic theater, and makes money out of the enterprise by fabulous feats of press-agenting. The thing is bouncingly written and may be read without much fatigue, but it has few points of contact with "The Old Wives' Tale" and "Clayhanger." W. B. Trites's "BARBARA GWYNNE" (*Duffield*), like his "John Cave," reveals a fresh viewpoint and a considerable enthusiasm, but it is chaotic in plan and gets nowhere, and most of the characters—notably the hero, Jerome S. McWade, a grocery boy become king of Wall Street—have far more excelsior in them than blood and bones. This Mr. Trites would have been better off today had a few emotional critics not overpraised him yesterday. As it is, his advance notices manufacture expectations which his merchandise cannot half fulfill.

"HARLETTE," by Marion Polk Angelotti (*Century Co.*), you read in THE SMART SET lately as "When the Devil Ruled." A diverting little piece in the Hewlett manner. "TOVA THE UNLIKE," by Eleanor Mercein Kelly (*Small-Maynard*), is a new variation upon the standard Japanese-American romance. "THE SCARLET RIDER," by Bertha Runkle (*Century Co.*), is the tale of a noble highwayman, redolent of the romantic musks of yesteryear. "THE ABYSMAL BRUTE," by Jack London (*Century Co.*), is a wholly improbable fable about a miraculous prize fighter. "HIS LOVE STORY," by Marie Van Vorst (*Bobbs-Merrill*), tells the story of a brave French officer's virtuous passion for a rich American girl, and is distinguished by a dog that is even more heroic than the hero. "THE MAKING OF THOMAS BARTON," by Anna Nicholas (*Bobbs-Merrill*), is a book of short stories, not one of them very striking, but all showing careful workmanship. "THE CANDID ADVENTURER," by Anna Coleman Ladd (*Houghton-Mifflin*), is the tale of a young artist's oscillations between two women. Finally comes "THE MASK," by Arthur Hornblow (*Dillingham*), a thriller of adventure and villainy so solemnly ludicrous that I commend it with confidence to all lovers of unconscious burlesque.